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THE NOVELS

COMPLETE AND UNABRIDGED

OF

VICTOR HUGO

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The Buckner Library Edition

The Laughing Man

by

Victor Hugo

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Everything about England is great, even that which is not good, even its oligarchy. The English patriciate is the patriciate, in the absolute sense of the word. No feudalism is more illustrious, more horrible, more deep-rooted. Let us acknowledge it, this feudalism has been useful in its time. It is in England that the phenomenon called Nobility must be studied, just as the phenomenon, Royalty, must be studied in France.

The true title of this book should be "Aristocracy." Another, which will follow, may be entitled "Monarchy." And these two books, if it be granted to the author to complete this work, will precede and bring on another which will be entitled *Ninety-three*.

Hauteville House, 1869.

PART ONE

THE SEA AND THE NIGHT

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TWO PRELIMINARY CHAPTERS

I.—URSUS
II.—THE COMPRACHICOS

I.

URSUS

I.

Ursus and Homo were united by a close friendship. Ursus was a man, Homo was a wolf. Their dispositions agreed. It was the man who had christened the wolf. Probably he had also chosen his own name; having found *Ursus* good for himself, he found *Homo* good for the beast. The association of this man and this wolf was profitable at fairs, at parish festivals, at street corners where passers-by gather in crowds, and by the need felt by people everywhere, of listening to idle talk and buying quack medicines. This docile and gracefully subordinate wolf was agreeable to the crowd. It is a pleasing thing to see tamings. We take supreme delight in looking at all varieties of domestication pass in parade before us. That is what collects so many people on the road of royal processions.

Ursus and Homo went from cross-road to

cross-road, from the public squares of Aberystwith to the public squares of Jedburgh, from country side to country side, from county to county, from town to town. One market exhausted, they passed on to the other. Ursus lived in a rolling hut, which Homo was sufficiently civilized to drag by day and guard by night. On difficult roads, on ascents, when there were too many ruts and too much mud, the man buckled the trace-band on his own neck and pulled fraternally side by side with the wolf. They had thus grown old together. They camped, as it might happen, on a waste, in a forest glade, in the goose-foot of road crossings, at the entrance of hamlets, at the gates of towns, in market-places, in the public malls, on the skirts of parks, on the squares in front of churches. When the wagon stopped on some fair ground, when the gossips ran up open-mouthed, when the curious made a circle around them, Ursus harangued. Homo approved. Homo, with a wooden bowl in his mouth, politely took up a collection among the audience. They gained their living. The wolf was learned, so was the man. The wolf had been trained by the man, or had trained himself, to various pretty wolfish tricks which contributed to the receipts. "Above all, do not degenerate into a man," his friend used to say to him.

The wolf never bit, the man did, sometimes. At least, biting was Ursus' intent. Ursus was a misanthrope, and, to emphasize his misanthropy, he had become a juggler. In order to live, too; for the stomach imposes its conditions. Besides, this misanthropical juggler, be it to complicate or to complete himself, was a doctor. To be a doctor is not much. Ursus was a ventriloquist. He could be heard speaking without a movement of his mouth. He could mimic any one's accent and pronunciation, so as to completely deceive; he imitated voices so that you believed you heard the very persons. Unassisted, he reproduced the murmur of a crowd, which gave him a right to the title of "Engastrimyth." He took it. He imitated all sorts of bird cries,—the thrush, the cricket-teal, the tit-lark, which is also called the hooded-lark; the white-breasted blackbird, all travelers like himself; so that at moments he made you hear, at his pleasure, either a public place full of human uproar, or a prairie filled with the voices of beasts; now stormy as a multitude, anon fresh and serene as the dawn. Such talents, however, though rare, do exist. In the last century, a man named Touzel, who imitated clamorous masses of mingled men and animals, and who could reproduce the cries of all beasts, was attached to the person of

Buffon in the capacity of a menagerie. Ursus was shrewd, puzzling and queer, and given to those singular explanations which we call fables. He seemed to believe them. This effrontery was part of his cleverness. He looked at people's palms, opened books at hap-hazard and drew conclusions, told fortunes, taught that it was dangerous to meet a black mare, and still more dangerous, at the moment you are about to start on a journey, to hear yourself called by some one who does not know where you are going, and he entitled himself "Dealer in superstitions." He used to say: "There is one difference between me and the Archbishop of Canterbury; *I* own up." Finally, the justly indignant archbishop bade him come to him one day; but Ursus cleverly disarmed his Grace, by reciting one of his, Ursus', own sermons upon the holy day of Christmas, which the delighted archbishop learned by heart, delivered from the pulpit, and published as his own. In consideration whereof, he forgave Ursus.

Ursus cured, because or in spite of the fact that he was a physician. He practised aromatics. He was versed in simples. He turned to account the profound power which lies in a heap of disdained plants, the clustered hazel, the white alder, the snowball, the wayfaring-tree, the alatern, the viburnum, the buck-thorn.

He treated phthisis with sun-dew; he used the leaves of the tithymal, which, plucked downwards, at the proper times, are a purgative, and plucked upwards are an emetic; he would rid you of a sore throat by means of the vegetable excrescence called "Jew's ear;" he knew which was the rush that cures the ox, and which was the mint that cures the horse; he was aware of the beauties and virtues of the herb mandragora, which, as everybody knows, is both male and female. He had recipes. He cured burns with salamander wool, of which, according to Pliny, Nero had a napkin. Ursus owned a retort and a chemist's flask; he made transmutations; he sold panaceas. The saying went that he had at one time been shut up for a while in Bedlam; they had done him the honor to take him for a madman, but they had released him when they perceived that he was nothing but a poet. This story was probably not true; but we all have to submit to such legends.

The truth is, that Ursus was a pedantic scholar, a man of taste, and an old Latin poet. He was learned under the two forms: he Hyppocratized and he Pindarized. He would have competed with Rapin and Vida in writing fustian. He would have composed Jesuit tragedies in a no less triumphant style than Father Bouhours. The result of his familiarity with the venerable rhythms and

metres of the ancients was to give him similes peculiarly his own, and a whole family of classical metaphors. He used to say of a mother preceded by her two daughters: "That is a dactyl;" of a father followed by his two sons: "That is an anapaest;" and of a little child walking between his grandfather and his grandmother: "That is an amphimacer." So much knowledge could only end in starvation. The school of Salerno says: "Eat little and often." Ursus ate little and rarely; thus obeying one-half of the precept and disobeying the other; but it was the fault of the public, which did not always flock to him, and did not often buy. Ursus used to say: "The expectoration of a sentence gives relief. The wolf is consoled by howling, the sheep by its wool, the forest by the finch, woman by love, and the philosopher by epiphonema." Ursus, at need, manufactured comedies, which he played, after a fashion; that helped sell drugs. Among other works, he had composed a heroic pastoral in honor of the knight Sir Hugh Middleton, who, in 1608, brought a river to London. This river had been quiet in the county of Hertford, sixty miles from London. Sir Hugh Middleton came and took it; he brought a brigade of six hundred men, armed with shovels and pick-axes, began to move the earth, hollowing it out here and raising it

there, sometimes twenty feet high, sometimes thirty feet deep, made wooden aqueducts in the air, and here and there eight hundred bridges, of stone, of brick, of timber, and, one fine morning, the river entered London, which lacked water. Ursus transformed all these vulgar details into a beautiful bucolic between the river Thames and the Serpentine stream. The river invited the stream to come to him, offered her his bed, and said to her: "I am too old to please women, but I am rich enough to pay them." An ingenious and gallant speech to express that Sir Hugh Middleton had performed the whole work at his own expense.

Ursus was remarkable in soliloquy. Of an unsociable and talkative disposition, not wanting to see any one, and yet wanting to talk to some one, he got out of the difficulty by talking to himself. Whoever has lived alone, knows to what a degree monologue is innate. The inward word itches. Haranguing space is an outlet. To speak aloud and alone makes the effect of a dialogue with the god which is within one. This was, as is well known, the habit of Socrates. He harangued himself. So did Luther. Ursus had some resemblance to these great men. He had the hermaphroditic faculty of being his own audience. He questioned and answered himself;

he glorified and insulted himself. He could be heard from the street talking to himself in his hut. The passers-by, who have their own way of appreciating clever people, said: "He's a fool." As we have just said, he railed at himself at times, but there were moments when he did himself justice. One day, in one of those allocutions, which he addressed to himself, he was heard to exclaim: "I have studied the vegetable in all its mysteries, in the stalk, in the bud, in the sepal, in the petal, in the stamen, in the carpel, in the ovule, in the theca, in the sporangium, and in the apothesium. I have sounded the depths of chromatics, of osmosy, and of chymosy, that is to say, the formation of color, odor, and taste." There was, no doubt, a little fatuity in this certificate which Ursus gave to Ursus, but let those who have not sounded the depths of chromatics, osmosy, and chymosy throw the first stone at him.

Fortunately Ursus had never gone to the Netherlands. They certainly would have wanted to weigh him there, in order to know whether he had the normal weight, above or below which a man is a sorcerer. In Holland this weight is wisely fixed by law. Nothing was more simple or more ingenious. It was a verification. They put you on a scale, and the evidence burst forth if you broke the equi-

librium; too heavy, you were hanged; too light, you were burned. At Oudewater, the scale for weighing sorcerers can be seen to this day, but it is used now for weighing cheese, religion having degenerated so much! Ursus would certainly have had a bone to pick with that scale. In his travels he abstained from Holland and he did well. Moreover, we believe, that he never used to leave Great Britain.

However that may be, being very poor and very morose, and having made Homo's acquaintance in a wood, the taste for a wandering life had come upon him. He had taken this wolf as a silent partner, and had roamed along the roads with him, living the great life of chance, in the open air. He had much ingenuity and mental reserve, and great art in everything regarding curing, operating, making sick people recover, and accomplishing surprising things peculiar to himself; he was considered a good mountebank and a good physician; he also passed, as will be understood, for a magician; just a little, not too much, for at that epoch it was unwholesome to be thought a friend of the devil. To tell the truth, Ursus, by his passion for pharmacy and his love of plants, exposed himself to danger, seeing that he often went to gather herbs in the crabbed thickets where Lucifer's

salads grow, and where one runs the risk, as has been undeniably established by Councilor De l'Ancre, of meeting in the evening mist, a man who rises out of the ground, "blind of the right eye, without a cloak, sword at side, barefooted and sandalled." Ursus, nevertheless, although of a strange turn and temperament, was too honorable to draw down or drive away hail, to make faces appear, to kill a man by the torment of too much dancing, to suggest pleasant or sad and frightful dreams, and to cause four-winged cocks to be born; there was no such wickedness in him. He was incapable of certain abominations. Such as, for example, speaking German, Hebrew, or Greek without learning them, which is the sign of execrable villany, or of a natural disease proceeding from some melancholy turn of mind. If Ursus spoke Latin, it was because he knew it. He would not have allowed himself to speak Syriac, inasmuch as he did not know it; besides, it is averred that Syriac is the language of witches' meetings. In medicine, he correctly preferred Galen to Cardan. Cardan, all learned man as he is, being but an earthworm compared to Galen.

In short, Ursus was not a person worried by the police. His hut was long enough and wide enough for him to lie down on a chest, which held his not very sumptuous clothes.

He was the owner of a lantern, of several wigs, and of some utensils hung on nails, among which were some musical instruments. He owned, besides, a bear-skin, with which he covered himself on the days of grand performances; he called that putting himself in costume. He used to say: "I have two skins; this is the real one." And he pointed to the bear-skin. The hut on wheels belonged to him and the wolf. Besides his hut, his retort, and his wolf, he had a flute and a viol-de-gamba, and he played agreeably on them. He manufactured his own elixirs. Sometimes he managed to get the wherewithal for a supper by his talents. There was a hole in the roof of his hut, through which the pipe of a cast-iron stove passed close to his chest, sufficiently so, to scorch the wood. This stove had two compartments; in one of them Ursus cooked alchemy, in the other, potatoes. At night, the wolf slept under the hut, amicably chained. Homo had black, and Ursus had gray hair; Ursus was fifty years old, unless he was sixty. His acceptance of human destiny was such, that he ate, as we saw, potatoes, dirty rubbish on which pigs and galley-slaves were then fed. He ate them, indignant and resigned. He was not tall, he was long. He was bent and sad. The bent figure of an old man is the settling down of life. Nature had

made him to be sad. It was difficult for him to smile and it had always been impossible for him to weep. He lacked the consolation of tears and the palliative of joy. An old man is a thinking ruin; Ursus was that sort of ruin. A charlatan's loquacity, a prophet's leanness, a loaded mine's irascibility, such was Ursus. In his youth he had been philosopher at the house of a lord.

This happened one hundred and eighty years ago, when men were a little more like wolves than they are to-day.

Not much more.

II.

Homo was not an ordinary wolf. By his appetite for medlars and apples, he would have been taken for a prairie wolf, by his dark fur he would have been taken for a lycaon, and by his howl, which was toned down to a bark, he would have been taken for a culpeu, but the pupil of the culpeu has not yet been sufficiently observed to make sure that he is not a fox, and Homo was a real wolf. He was five feet long, which is a fine length for a wolf, even in Lithuania; he was very strong; he had an oblique look, which was not his fault; he had a soft tongue, and he at

times licked Ursus with it; he had a narrow brush of short bristles on his back-bone, and he was lean with a fine forest leanness. Before knowing Ursus and having a cart to draw, he made his forty leagues a night, easily. Ursus, meeting him in a thicket, near a clear brook, had conceived a high opinion of him on seeing him fish for cray-fish, with wisdom and prudence, and had proclaimed him an honest and authentic Koupara wolf, of the kind called crab-eating dog.

Ursus preferred Homo, as a beast of burden, to an ass. It would have been repugnant to him to have had his hut drawn by an ass; he thought too much of the ass for that. In addition to this, he had remarked that the ass, a four-footed thinker, but little understood by men, sometimes pricks up his ears in the most uneasy manner when philosophers say foolish things. In life, between our thought and ourselves an ass is a third party, —which is uncomfortable. As a friend, Ursus preferred Homo to a dog, deeming that the wolf's was a much less common friendship.

That is why Homo sufficed for Ursus. Homo was more than a companion for Ursus, he was his counterpart. Ursus used to pat his hollow flanks saying: "I have found my second self."

He used to add: "After I am dead, who-

ever wishes to know me, need only study Homo. I shall leave him behind me as a true copy."

The English law, which is not very tender towards forest beasts, might perhaps have sought to pick a quarrel with this wolf, and found fault with him for his boldness in going familiarly into towns; but Homo profited by the immunity granted to "servants" under a statute of Edward II. "Every servant, following his master, may come and go freely." Besides, a certain laxness with regard to wolves, had resulted from a fashion among the court ladies, under the last Stuarts, of having, instead of dogs, little corsac-wolves, called adives, the size of cats, which they imported from Asia at great cost.

Ursus had imparted a portion of his talents to Homo—to stand erect, to dilute his rage into ill-humor, to growl instead of howling, etc.; on his part the wolf had taught the man what *he* knew,—to do without a roof, to do without bread, to do without fire, to prefer hunger in a wood to slavery in a palace.

The hut, a sort of cabin-wagon, which followed the most varied itinerary, without, however, going out of England and Scotland, had four wheels, plus shafts for the wolf and a swing-bar for the man. This bar was a precaution in case of bad roads. The hut was

very substantial, although made of light boards in stud-work. In front it had a glazed door with a little balcony, used when making speeches, something between a platform and a pulpit, and at the rear there was a whole door with a sliding panel. The lowering of three steps, moving on a hinge and fixed behind the paneled door, gave admittance to the hut, which was well closed at night by bolts and locks. It had been much rained and snowed upon. It had been painted, but one could hardly tell of what color, changes of season being for wagons, what changes of reign are for courtiers. In front, on the outside, on a sort of thin deal frontispiece, this inscription could once upon a time have been deciphered in black letters on a white ground, which had gradually mingled and blended:

"By friction gold annually loses one fourteen hundredth of its bulk; this is called '*wear*;' hence it follows, that on fourteen millions of gold, circulating all over the world, a million is lost every year. This million of gold goes off in dust, flies away, floats, is reduced to atoms, becomes respirable, freights, doses, ballasts and weighs on consciences, and amalgamates with the soul of the rich which it makes arrogant, and with the soul of the poor which it makes fierce."

This inscription, effaced and erased by rain

and the favor of Providence, was fortunately illegible, for it is probable, that being at once enigmatical and transparent, this philosophy of inhaled gold might not have been to the taste of the sheriffs, provosts, marshals, and other wig-wearers of the law. English legislation did not trifle at that time. It was easy to be a felon. Magistrates were ferocious by tradition and cruelty was a matter of routine. Inquisitorial judges swarmed. Jeffreys had left a litter.

III.

In the interior of the hut there were two other inscriptions. Above the chest, on the white-washed plank wall, this could be read, written in ink and by hand:

"THE ONLY THINGS IT IS IMPORTANT TO KNOW:

"The baron peer of England wears a circlet with six pearls.

"The coronet begins at the viscount.

"The viscount wears a coronet of pearls not numbered; the earl a coronet of pearls on points, intermingled with strawberry leaves lower down; the marquis, pearls and leaves of equal height; the duke, leaves without pearls;

the Royal Duke, a circle of crosses and *fleurs-de-lys;* the Prince of Wales, a crown like the King's, but not closed.

"The Duke is a '*most high and most mighty prince;*' the Marquis and the Earl, '*most noble and mighty lord;*' the Viscount, '*noble and mighty lord;*' the baron, '*a veritable lord.*'

"The Duke is '*His Grace;*' the other peers, '*Their Lordships.*'

"The Lords are inviolable.

"The peers are a chamber and a court, *concilium et curia,* legislature and court of justice.

"'Most honorable' is more than 'right honorable.'

"The lords who are peers are 'lords by right;' the lords who are not peers, are 'lords by courtesy;' there are no lords but those who are peers.

"A lord never takes an oath, neither to the king, nor in court of law. His word suffices. He says: '*On my honor.*'

"The Commons, who are the people, when summoned to the bar of the Lords, present themselves there humbly, bare-headed, before the peers, who remain covered.

"The Commons send their bills to the Lords by forty members, who present the bill with three low bows.

"The Lords send their bills to the Commons by a simple clerk.

"In case of disagreement the two Houses confer in the Painted Chamber, the peers seated and wearing their hats, the Commons standing and bare-headed.

"By a law of Edward VI., the lords have the privilege of simple homicide. A lord who simply kills a man, is not prosecuted.

"Barons have the same rank as bishops.

"In order to be a baron-peer, it is necessary to hold from the king *per baroniam integram*, by full barony.

"The full barony consists of thirteen knights' noble fiefs and a quarter, each knight's fief being of the value of twenty pounds sterling, which amounts to four hundred marks.

"The head of a barony, *caput baroniæ*, is a castle hereditarily governed just like England herself; that is to say, which can descend to daughters only in default of male children, and, in this case, going to the eldest daughter, *cæteris filiabus aliunde satisfactis*. Which amounts to saying: One provides for the other daughters, as one can. (Note by Ursus on the margin of the wall.)

"The barons take their title of *'lord'* from the Saxon *Laford* from the high Latin *dominus* and the low Latin *Lordus*.

"The elder and younger sons of viscounts and barons are the first squires of the kingdom.

"The eldest sons of peers take precedence over Knights of the Garter; the younger sons do not.

"The eldest son of a viscount walks behind all the barons, and before all the baronets.

"Every daughter of a lord is a '*lady*.' Other English girls are '*miss*.'

"All judges are inferior to peers. The sergeant has a hood of lamb-skin; the judge has a hood of miniver, *de minuto vario*, made of small white furs of all sorts, excepting ermine. Ermine is reserved for peers and the king.

"A writ of *supplicavit* cannot be granted against a lord.

"A lord cannot be kept in prison except the case be one for the Tower of London.

"A lord summoned to the king has the right to kill a deer or two in the royal park.

"The lord holds a baronial court in his castle.

"It is unworthy of a lord to go through the streets in a cloak followed by two footmen. He can only show himself with a large train of gentlemen of his household.

"The peers go to Parliament in coaches in file; the Commons do not. Some peers go

to Westminster in open four-wheeled chaises. The shape of these coaches and chaises, with their blazonry and coronets, is allowed only to the lords, and forms a part of their dignity.

"A lord cannot be condemned to a fine but by his peers, and never to more than five shillings, except a duke, who may be condemned to ten.

"A lord may have six foreigners in his house. Every other Englishman cannot have more than four.

"A lord may have eight tuns of wine without paying duty.

"A lord alone is exempt from presenting himself before the sheriff of the circuit.

"A lord cannot be taxed for the militia.

"When it pleases a lord, he raises a regiment and gives it to the king; thus do their Graces the Duke of Athol, the Duke of Hamilton, and the Duke of Northumberland.

"A lord can hold only from lords.

"In a civil suit he can demand a dismissal of the case, if there be not at least one knight among the judges.

"A lord appoints his chaplains.

"A baron appoints three chaplains; a viscount, four; an earl and a marquis, five; a duke, six.

"A lord cannot be put to the torture, even for high treason.

"A lord cannot be branded on the hand.

"A lord is a clerk, even though he knows not how to read. He knows by right.

"A duke has himself accompanied by a canopy wherever the king is not present; a viscount has a canopy in his house; a baron has an assay cup and has it held under his goblet while he drinks; a baroness has the right to have her train borne by a man in the presence of a viscountess.

"Eighty-six lords or eldest sons of lords preside at the eighty-six tables, each laid for five hundred persons, which are served to his Majesty in his palace every day, at the cost of the country surrounding the royal residence.

"A plebeian, who strikes a lord, has his hand cut off.

"A lord is nearly a king.

"A king is nearly God.

"The earth is a lordship.

"The English say '*my lord*' to God."

Opposite this inscription another could be read, written in the same fashion, and, as follows:

"SATISFACTION WHICH MUST SUFFICE THOSE WHO HAVE NOTHING."

"Henry Auverquerque, Earl of Grantham, who sits in the House of Lords, between the

Earl of Jersey and the Earl of Greenwich, has an income of one hundred thousand pounds sterling. To his Lordship belongs the palace of Grantham Terrace, built all of marble, and famous for what is called the 'labyrinth of corridors,' which is a curiosity where there is the carnation corridor of Sarancolin marble, the brown corridor of Astrachan lumachelle, the white corridor of Lani marble, the black corridor of Alabanda marble, the gray corridor of Staremma marble, the yellow corridor of Hessian marble, the green corridor of Tyrolean marble, the red corridor half of Bohemian griotto, half of Cordovan lumachelle, the blue corridor of dark blue Genoese marble, the violet corridor of Catalonian granite, the mourning corridor, veined black and white, of Murviedro schist, the pink corridor of cipollino from the Alps, the pearl-colored corridor of Nonetto lumachelle, and the multicolored corridor, called courtiers' corridor, of harlequin breccia.

"Richard Lowther, Viscount Lonsdale, owns Lowther in Westmoreland, which has a magnificent approach, and a flight of steps which seem to invite kings to enter.

"Richard, Earl of Scarborough, Viscount and Baron Lumley, Viscount of Waterford in Ireland, Lord-Lieutenant and Vice-Admiral of the county of Northumberland, of the city

and county of Durham, owns the double-castle-ward of Stanstead, the ancient and the modern, where you admire a superb semi-circular railing surrounding the basin of an incomparable fountain. He has besides his castle at Lumley.

"Robert Darcy, Earl of Holderness, has his domain of Holderness, with baronial towers, and interminable gardens in the French style, where he drives in a coach-and-six, preceded by two out-riders, as becomes a peer of England.

"Charles Beauclerk, Duke of Saint-Albans, Earl of Burford, Baron Heddington, Grand Falconer of England, has a house at Windsor, regal, even though next to the king's.

"Charles Bodville, Lord Robartes, Baron Truro, Viscount Bodmyn, owns Wimple in Cambridge, which forms three palaces with three pediments, one rounded and two triangular. The entrance is through a quadruple avenue of trees.

"The most noble and most puissant Lord Philip Herbert, Viscount of Cardiff, Earl of Montgomery, Earl of Pembroke, Lord, Peer and Ross of Candall, Marmion, Saint Quentin and Churland, guardian of the Stanneries in the counties of Cornwall and Devon, Hereditary Visitor of Jesus College, has the marvellous garden of Wilton, where there are two

fountains with sheaf-shaped jets, more beautiful than the Versailles of the Very Christian King Louis the Fourteenth.

"Charles Seymour, Duke of Somerset, has Somerset House on the Thames, which equals the Villa Pamphili at Rome. On the great mantel-piece can be seen two porcelain vases of the Yu-en dynasty, which are worth half a million in French money.

"In Yorkshire, Arthur, Lord Ingram, Viscount Irwin, has Temple Newsham, which is entered through a triumphal arch, and where the wide flat roofs resemble Moorish terraces.

"Robert, Lord Terrers of Chartley, Bourchier and Lovaine, has Staunton-Harold in Leicestershire, where the park is geometrically laid out in the shape of a temple with its pediment; and the great church with the square tower, in front of the sheet of water, belongs to his Lordship also.

"In the county of Northampton, Charles Spencer, Earl of Sunderland, one of Her Majesty's Privy Council, possesses Althrop, which is entered by a gateway of four pillars surmounted by marble groups.

"Laurence Hyde, Earl of Rochester, has New-Park, in Surrey, magnificent by its sculptured acroteria, its circular lawn surrounded by trees, and its woods, at the extremity of which there is a small, artistically rounded

mountain, topped by a great oak which can be seen from afar.

"Philip Stanhope, Earl Chesterfield, owns Bredby in Derbyshire, which has a superb clock-tower, falconries, warrens, and very beautiful, long, square and oval sheets of water, one of which is in the shape of a mirror, with two jets of great height.

"Lord Cornwallis, Baron of Eye, has Brome Hall, which is a fourteenth century palace.

"The most noble Algernon Capel, Viscount Malden, Earl of Essex, has Cashiobury in Herefordshire, a castle which has the form of a capital H, and where the preserves are well stocked with game.

"Charles, Lord Ossulstone, has Dawly, in Middlesex, which is approached through Italian gardens.

"James Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, has Hatfield House, seven leagues from London, with its four lordly pavilions, its belfry in the centre and its court of honor paved in black and white like that of Saint Germain. This palace, which has a frontage of two hundred and seventy-two feet, was built during the reign of James I. by the Lord High Treasurer of England, who was the great grandfather of the present Earl. The bedstead of a Countess of Salisbury may be seen there, of inestimable value, entirely made of a sort of Brazilian wood, which is a

panacea against the bite of serpents, and called *milhombres*, which means *a thousand men.* On this bed is written in golden letters: '*Honi soit qui mal y pense.*'

"Edward Rich, Earl of Warwich and Holland, has Warwich Castle, where whole oaks are burned in the fire-places.

"In the parish of Seven-Oaks, Charles Sackville, Baron Buckhurst, Viscount Cranfield, Earl of Dorset and Middlesex, has Knowle which is as large as a city and composed of three palaces, parallel one behind the other, like lines of infantry, with ten staircased gables on the principal façade, and a gate under a four-towered keep.

"Thomas Thynne, Viscount Weymouth, Baron Varminster, owns Longleate, which has almost as many chimneys, lanterns, alcoves, pepper-box gables, pavilions and turrets as Chambord, in France, which belongs to the king.

"Henry Howard, Earl of Suffolk, has, twelve leagues away from London, the palace of Audly End in Middlesex which hardly yields in vastness and majesty to the Escurial of the King of Spain.

"In Bedfordshire, Wrest-House and Park, which is a whole district enclosed by ditches and walls, with woods, rivers and hills, belongs to Henry, Marquis of Kent.

"Hampton Court, in Hereford, with its strongly embattled keep and its garden barred in by a sheet of water which separates it from the forest, belongs to Thomas, Lord Coningsby.

"Grimsthorp, in Lincolnshire, with its long façade intersected by high turrets in pale, its parks, its fish-ponds, its pheasantries, its sheep-folds, its bowling-greens, its quincunxes, its malls, its woods of lofty trees, its flower-gardens, embroidered, quadrilled and lozenged with flowers, resembling great carpets, its race-courses, and the majesty of the circle where the carriages turn before entering the castle, belongs to Robert, Earl Lindsay, hereditary lord of the Forest of Waltham.

"Up Park, in Sussex, a square mansion, with two symmetrical belfry pavilions, one at each side of the court of honor, is owned by the Right Honorable Ford, Lord Grey, Viscount Glendale and Earl of Tankerville.

"Newnham Padox, in Warwichshire, which has two quadrangular fish-ponds and a gable with a fourfold paneled window, belongs to the Earl of Denbigh, who is Count of Rheinfelden, in Germany.

"Wythame, in the county of Berks, with its French garden, where there are four curiously shaped arbors, and its great embattled tower, flanked by two high war galleys, belongs

to Lord Montague, Earl of Abingdon, who also has Rycott, of which he is the baron, and the principal door of which bears the device *Virtus ariete fortior* (Virtue is stronger than a ram).

"William Cavendish, Duke of Devonshire, has six castles, one of which is Chatsworth, which is two storied, and of the most beautiful Grecian order; and His Grace has, besides, his mansion in London, where there is a lion that turns his back on the king's palace.

"Viscount Kinalmeaky, who is Earl of Cork in Ireland, has Burlington House in Piccadilly, with vast gardens which extend to the fields outside of London; he also has Chiswick, where there are nine magnificent main buildings; he has besides Londesburgh which is a new mansion by the side of an old palace.

"The Duke of Beaufort has Chelsea, which contains two Gothic castles and one Florentine; he also has Badminton in Gloucester, which is a residence whence a number of avenues branch out like rays from a star. The most noble and mighty Prince Henry, Duke of Beaufort, is at the same time, Marquis and Earl of Worcester, Baron Raglan, Baron Power and Baron Herbert of Chepstow.

"John Holles, Duke of Newcastle and Marquis of Clare, has Bolsover, with its majestic square donjon keep, and also Haughton in

Nottingham, where in the centre of a sheet of water there is a round pyramid in imitation of the Tower of Babel.

"William, Lord Craven, Baron Craven of Hampstead, has a residence in Warwickshire, Combe Abbey, where the most beautiful jet of water in England is to be seen; and in Berkshire, two baronies, Hampstead Marshall, built into the façade of which there are five open Gothic towers, and Ashdowne Park, which is a castle standing on the point of intersection of cross-roads in a forest.

"Lord Linnaeus Clancharlie, Baron Clancharlie and Hunkerville, Marquis of Corleone in Sicily, derives his peerage from the Castle of Clancharlie, built in 914 by Edward the Elder against the Danes; also Hunkerville House at London, which is a palace, and at Windsor, Corleone Lodge, which is another; and eight castle-wards, one at Bruxton on the Trent, with rights on the alabaster quarries, then Gumdraith, Homble, Moricambe, Trenwardraith, Hell-Kerters, where there is a marvellous well, Pillinmore and its peat bogs, Reculver near the ancient city of Vagniacoe, Vinecaunton on Mount Moilembli; besides nineteen towns and villages with bailiwicks, and all the country-side of Pensneth-chase, which together bring His Lordship an income of forty thousand pounds sterling.

"The one hundred and seventy-two peers flourishing under James II. own between them in one sum, a revenue of twelve hundred and seventy-two thousand pounds sterling per annum, which is the eleventh part of the revenue of England."

In the margin opposite the last name, Lord Linnaeus Clancharlie, one could read this note in Ursus' hand:

"*—Rebel; in exile; goods, castles and domains under sequestration; serves him right.*"

IV.

Ursus admired Homo. We admire what is close to us. That is a law.

To be always silently furious was the interior condition of Ursus, to scold was his exterior condition. Ursus was the malcontent of creation. He was by nature one who opposed. He took the Universe unkindly. He gave a certificate of satisfaction neither to any one, nor to any thing. Making honey did not absolve the bee from stinging; a full-blown rose did not absolve the sun from yellow fever and the black vomit. It is probable that in secret Ursus made many criticisms on God. He said: "Evidently the devil is

on springs, and the wrong on God's part is having pulled the trigger." He approved of hardly anything except princes, and he had his own manner of applauding them. One day when James II. made a gift of a massive golden lamp to the Virgin in an Irish Catholic chapel, Ursus, who was passing by there with Homo, who was more indifferent, burst out in admiration before all the people, and exclaimed: "It is certain that the Virgin has far more need of a golden lamp, than those little bare-footed children there have of shoes."

Such proofs of his "loyalty" and the evidence of his respect for the established powers, probably contributed not a little to make the magistrates tolerate his vagabond existence and his *mésalliance* with a wolf. Sometimes in the evening, out of a friendly weakness, he allowed Homo to stretch his limbs a little and wander, at liberty, around the hut; the wolf was incapable of a breach of trust, and behaved "in society," that is to say, among men, with the discretion of a poodle; however, if they had had anything to do with bad-tempered constables, it might have led to inconveniences, for that reason Ursus kept the honest wolf locked up as much as possible. From the political point of view, his placard on gold, which had become illegi-

ble, and was besides scarcely intelligible, was nothing more than a daub on the façade, and did not denounce him. Even after James II., and under the "respectable" reign of William and Mary, the little towns of the counties of England could see his wagon prowl around peaceably. He traveled freely from one end of Great Britain to the other, selling his philters and his phials, making his quack-doctor mummeries, fully seconded by his wolf, and he passed easily through the meshes of the police net, which at this epoch was stretched all over England, for weeding out wandering bands, and particularly for stopping the "Comprachicos" on their way.

Moreover, this was right. Ursus belonged to no band. Ursus lived with Ursus; in a *tête-à-tête* with himself, into which a wolf gently thrust his muzzle. It would have been Ursus' ambition to be a Carib; not being able to be one, he was always alone. The solitary man is a modified savage, accepted by civilization. The more one wanders, the more one is alone. Hence his perpetual change of place. To remain anywhere seemed to him a sort of taming. He spent his life in going his way. The sight of cities intensified his taste for bushes, thickets, thorns and holes in rocks. His home was the forest. He did not feel himself very much out of place in the murmur of public places,

similar enough to that of trees. A crowd, in a certain measure, satisfies the taste one has for the desert. What displeased him in his hut, was the fact, that it had a door and windows and resembled a house. He would have reached his ideal, if he could have put a cavern on four wheels and traveled about in a cave.

He did not smile, as we have said, but he laughed; at times, even frequently, with a bitter laugh. There is satisfaction in a smile, while a laugh is often a refusal.

His great business was to hate mankind. He was implacable in this hatred. Having made it clear that human life is a horrible thing, having remarked the superposition of plagues, kings over the people, war over the kings, pests over war, famine over the pest, and stupidity over it all, having proved undeniably that there is a certain quantity of punishment in the mere fact of existing, having recognized that death is a deliverance, when they brought him a sick man he cured him. He had cordials and beverages to prolong the life of old people. He put the worst cripples on their feet and threw this sarcasm at them: "Now you are on your legs. May you walk long in the valley of tears!" When he saw a poor man dying of hunger, he gave him all the farthings he had about him, grumbling: "Live, wretch; eat! last long! it is not I

who will abridge thy prison term." After which he would rub his hands and say: "I do men all the harm I can."

Through the hole in the back window, passers-by could read this sign, charcoaled in large letters on the ceiling of the hut, but visible from without: URSUS, PHILOSOPHER.

II.

THE COMPRACHICOS

I.

Who now knows the word *Comprachicos*, and who knows its meaning?

The Comprachicos, or Comprapequenos, were a strange and hideous wandering or nomadic affiliation, famous in the seventeenth century, forgotten in the eighteenth, unknown to-day. The Comprachicos are, like "Succession powder," an ancient, social, characteristic detail. They are a part of the old human ugliness. For the wide glance of history which sees things as a whole, the Comprachicos are connected with the immense fact of Slavery. Joseph sold by his brethren is a chapter of their story. The Comprachicos have left their traces in the penal legislation of Spain and England. Here and there in the dark confusion of English laws, the impression of this monstrous fact can be found, as one finds the footprint of a savage in a forest.

Comprachicos, as well as Comprapequenos, is a compound Spanish word, which means "Buyers of little ones."

The Comprachicos drove a traffic in children.

They bought them and they sold them.

They did not steal them. The stealing of children is another branch of industry.

And what did they make of these children?

Monsters.

Why monsters?

To make people laugh.

The people need to laugh; so do kings. There must be clowns for the cross-roads and buffoons for the Louvres. The one is called Turlupin, the other Triboulet.

The efforts of man to procure himself pleasure are sometimes worthy of the philosopher's attention.

What are we sketching in these few preliminary pages? A chapter of the most terrible of books, of the book which might be entitled: "The Utilization of the Unhappy by the Happy."

II.

A child destined to be a plaything for men—such a thing has existed. It exists to this day. In simple and cruel epochs, it constitutes a special trade. The seventeenth century,

called the Great Century, was one of those epochs. It was a very Byzantine century; it had a corrupt simplicity and a delicate cruelty, a curious variety of civilization. A tiger pretending to be fastidious. Madame de Sévigne simpers on the subject of the stake and the wheel. That century utilized children a great deal; the historians, the flatterers of that century, have hidden the ulcer, but they have allowed the remedy to be seen—Vincent de Paul.

In order to make the human toy a success, he must be taken in hand early. The dwarf must be begun while he is still a baby. They abused childhood. But a straight child is not amusing. A hunchback is funnier.

Hence an art. There were trainers. They took a man and made an abortion of him; they took a face and made a muzzle of it. They stunted growth; they kneaded the physiognomy. This artificial production of monstrosities had its rules. It was a complete science. Imagine orthopædy reversed. Where God put vision, this art put a squint. Where God put harmony, they put deformity. Where God put perfection, they restored the rough draft. And, in the eyes of the connoisseurs, it was the rough draft which was perfect. There was the same tampering with animals; piebald horses were invented; Turenne rode a piebald horse. In our days are not dogs painted blue

and green? Nature is our canvas. Man has always wanted to add something to God. Man retouches creation, sometimes well, sometimes ill. The court buffoon was nothing but endeavor to lead man back to the monkey. Progress backwards. A master-piece in retrogression. At the same time they were trying to make a man of the monkey. Barbare, Duchess of Cleveland and Countess of Southampton, had a Brazilian monkey for her page. At the house of Frances Sutton, Baroness Dudley, eighth peeress on the barons' bench, tea was served by a baboon dressed in gold brocade, that Lady Dudley called "my negro." Catharine Sedley, Countess of Dorchester, went to take her seat in Parliament in a coach with armorial bearings, on the back of which there stood, muzzles to the wind, three monkeys in full livery. A Duchess of Medina-Cœli, whose levée Cardinal Pole attended, had her stockings put on by an orang-outang. These promoted monkeys counterbalanced these brutalized and bestialized men. This promiscuousness of man and beast insisted upon by the great, was particularly emphasized by the dwarf and the dog. The dwarf never left the dog, which was always taller than he. The dog was the dwarf's walking attendant. It was as if their two collars had been linked. This juxtaposition is authenticated by a mass of domestic records,

notably by the portrait of Jeffrey Hudson, dwarf of Henrietta of France, the daughter of Henry IV., and the wife of Charles I.

To degrade man leads to deforming him. They completed the suppression of his natural state by disfigurement. Certain vivisectors of those times succeeded very well in wiping out the divine effigy from the human face. Doctor Conquest, a member of the college of Amen Street and sworn inspector of the chemists' shops of London, has written a book in Latin on this perverted surgery, of which he gives the *modus operandi*. If we may believe Justus of Carrick-Fergus, the inventor of this surgery was a monk, named Avenmore, an Irish word which signifies "Great River."

The dwarf of the Elector Palatine, Perkes, whose effigy or spectre comes out of a box like a jumping-jack in the Heideberg cellar, was a remarkable specimen of this science, which was very varied in its application.

It fashioned creatures whose law of existence was monstrously simple, permitting them to suffer, commanding them to amuse.

III.

This manufacture of monsters was practised on a great scale and comprised various sorts.

The sultan needed some; the pope needed some. The one to guard his wives; the other to say his prayers. It was a species out of the common, unable to reproduce itself. These almost human beings were useful to voluptuousness and to religion. The seraglio and the Sistine chapel used the same kind of monsters, ferocious in the former, suave, in the latter case.

In those times they knew how to produce things that are now no longer produced; they had talents which we lack, and it is not without reason that the clever people say we are falling off. We no longer know how to sculpture in palpitating human flesh; that is, because the art of torture is being lost; there were *virtuosi* in that style, there are no more; they have simplified that art to such a point, that perhaps it will soon disappear altogether. In cutting limbs from living men, in opening their abdomens, in tearing out their entrails, they caught phenomena in the very act, they had godsends; we must forego that, and we are deprived of the progress that the executioner helped surgery to make.

This vivisection of former times did not limit itself to the making up of phenomena for public places, of buffoons for palaces, a sort of supplement to the courtier, and of eunuchs for Sultans and Popes. It abounded

in varieties. One of its triumphs was to make a cock for the King of England.

It was the custom that, in the palace of the King of England, there should be a sort of nocturnal man who could crow like a cock. This watcher, up, while others slept, roamed about the palace, and from hour to hour uttered this barn-yard cry, repeated as many times as was necessary for supplying the place of a bell. This man, promoted to be a cock, had for this purpose, in his childhood, undergone an operation of the pharynx, which forms part of the art described by Doctor Conquest. Under Charles II., the salivation resulting from the operation, having disgusted the Duchess of Portsmouth, the function was retained, so as not to lessen the lustre of the crown, but they had the cock's crow uttered by an unmutilated man. A veteran officer was usually chosen for this honorable employment. Under James II., this functionary was named William Sampson, Cock, and received nine pounds, two shillings and sixpence annually for crowing. (See Dr. Chamberlayne's "Present State of England," 1688, first part, chapter xiii., p. 179.)

Scarcely one hundred years ago, at St. Petersburg, as the memoirs of Catharine II. tell us, when the Czar or the Czarina were displeased with a Russian prince, they made the prince

squat in the great antechamber of the palace, and he remained in this posture an appointed number of days, mewing like a cat, or clucking like a setting hen, and pecking his food from the ground.

These fashions have gone out; less than one may think, however. Nowadays, courtiers, clucking in order to please, modify the intonation a little. More than one picks up from the ground, we will not say from the mud, what he eats.

It is very fortunate that kings cannot make mistakes. In this manner their inconsistencies never embarrass. By approving unceasingly, one is sure to be always right, which is agreeable. Louis XIV. would not have liked to see at Versailles, either an officer, acting the cock, or a prince, acting the turkey. That which enhanced the royal and imperial dignity in England and in Russia, would have seemed to Louis the Great, incompatible with the crown of Saint Louis. It is known how displeased he was when Madame Henrietta, one night, so far forgot herself as to see a hen in her dream, a grave impropriety, indeed, in a court personage. When one belongs to the lofty, one ought not to dream of the lowly. Bossuet, it may be remembered, shared the scandalized feelings of Louis XIV.

IV.

The traffic in children in the seventeenth century was complemented, as we have just explained, by a craft. The Comprachicos carried on this business and practised this craft. They bought children, worked up the raw material a little, and then sold it.

The vendors were of all sorts, from the wretched father ridding himself of his family, to the master utilizing his stud of slaves. There was nothing about selling men that was not quite simple. Men have fought in our days to maintain that right. It will be remembered that less than a century ago, the Elector of Hesse sold his subjects to the King of England, who needed men for killing in America. People went to the Elector of Hesse, as they would have gone to the butchers', to buy meat. The Elector of Hesse kept cannon-flesh. This prince hung up his subjects in his shop. "Make your bargain, it's for sale." In England, under Jeffreys, after the tragic adventure of Monmouth, there were numbers of lords and gentlemen beheaded and quartered; these victims left wives and daughters, widows and orphans, that James II. gave to the Queen, his wife. The Queen sold these ladies to William Penn. It is probable that

the King had a discount allowed him and so much per cent. What is astonishing, is, not that James II. should have sold these women, but that William Penn should have bought them.

Penn's purchase excuses, or explains itself by this, that Penn having to sow a desert with men, needed women. The women formed a part of his implements.

The ladies were a good piece of business for Her Gracious Majesty, the Queen. The young ones were sold high. One thinks, with the discomfort which a complicated sense of scandal causes, that Penn probably got some old duchesses, very cheap.

The Comprachicos were also called "the cheylos," a Hindoo word which signifies *child-hunters*.

For a long time the Comprachicos only half concealed themselves. There is, at times, in the social order, a shadowy condition which favors villainous trades; they thrive there. We have seen in our day, in Spain, an association of this kind, directed by the bandit Ramon Selles, last from 1834 to 1866, and hold three provinces, Valencia, Alicante, and Murcia, in terror for thirty years.

Under the Stuarts, the Comprachicos were not in disfavor at court. At need, statecraft made use of them. For James II. they were

almost an *instrumentum regni*. It was the epoch when encumbering and refractory families were lopped off, when filiations were cut short, when heirs were abruptly suppressed. At times, one branch was frustrated for the benefit of another. The Comprachicos had a talent, disfiguration, which recommended them to state policy. To disfigure is better than to kill. There certainly was the iron mask, but that is a strong measure. It is impracticable to people Europe with iron masks, while it is no unlikely thing for deformed buffoons to run about the streets; and then the iron mask may be torn off, while the mask of flesh cannot. To mask you forever with your own face, nothing could be more ingenious. The Comprachicos cultivated man as the Chinese cultivated trees. They had secrets, as we have said. They had tricks. A lost art. A certain odd stuntedness came out of their hands. It was ridiculous and profound. They retouched a little being with so much cleverness that its father would not have known it. "And that even the father's eye would fail to recognize," as Racine has said, with a mistake in his French. Sometimes they left the dorsal column straight, but reworked the face. They took the marks out of a child as they would out of a handkerchief.

The productions destined for mountebanks

had their joints dislocated in a scientific manner. They seemed to have had their bones taken out. That made gymnasts.

The Comprachicos took away not only the child's face, but also his memory. At least, they took away all they could. The child had no consciousness of the mutilation it had undergone. This frightful surgery left its trace on his face, but not on his mind. He could, at the most, remember that one day he had been seized by men, that he then had fallen asleep, and afterwards had been cured. Cured of what? He did not know. Of the burnings by sulphur, of the incisions with iron, he could recall nothing. The Comprachicos, during the operation, put the child in a comatose state by means of a stupefying powder, which was considered magical and which suppressed pain. This powder has always been known in China, and is still used there. China has had all our inventions before us, printing, artillery, aërostation, chloroform. Only the discovery that takes immediate life and growth in Europe, and becomes a prodigy and a marvel, remains an embryo in China and is preserved there, dead. China is a jar for embryos.

Since we are in China, let us remain there a moment longer, for a detail. In China, from times immemorial, they have made a refined study of the following art and trade—

namely, the moulding of a living man. They take a child, two or three years old, and put him in a more or less curiously shaped porcelain vase, without lid or bottom, so that his head and feet may pass out. By day the vase is kept upright, by night it is laid down, so the child may sleep. The child thus grows, without becoming taller, and fills all the contours of the vase with its compressed flesh and twisted bones. This bottled growth lasts several years. At a given moment it is irremediable. When it is judged that it has "taken," and that the monster is made, they break the vase, the child comes out, and you have a man shaped like a jar.

This is convenient; you can order your dwarf of the desired shape beforehand.

V.

James II. tolerated the Comprachicos. For a good reason—he made use of them. At least, this happened more than once. We do not always disdain what we despise. This lower industry, an excellent expedient at times for that higher industry called policy, was purposely left miserable, but not persecuted. No surveillance, but a certain attention. That may be useful. The law closed one eye, the king opened the other.

Sometimes the king went so far as to acknowledge his complicity. Those are the audacities of monarchical terrorism. The disfigured creature was marked with a *fleur-de-lys;* they took away the mark of God and put on the king's. Jacob Astley, knight and baronet, lord of Melton, constable in the county of Norfolk, had, in his family, a child which had been sold, on whose forehead the commissioner of sales had branded a *fleur-de-lys*. In certain cases, if, for special reasons, one cared to prove the royal origin of the new position created for the child, they used such means. England has always done us the honor to utilize the *fleur-de-lys* for her personal service.

The Comprachicos, with the shade that separates a trade from fanaticism, were like the Stranglers of India; they lived by themselves, in bands, somewhat like mountebanks, but merely as a pretext; moving about was thus easier for them. They camped here and there, but were serious, religious, had no likeness at all to other nomads, and were incapable of theft. People, for a long time, wrongly confounded them with the Moriscos of Spain and the Moriscos of China. The Moriscos of Spain were counterfeiters, those of China were thieves. Nothing of the kind about the Comprachicos. They were honest people. Think of it as we will, they were at times scrupu-

lously honest. They opened a door, entered, bargained for a child, paid, and took it away. It was done correctly.

They were of all nationalities. Under this name, *Comprachicos*, English, French, Castilians, Germans, Italians fraternized. One common thought, one common superstition, the common working at the same trade, make such fusions. In this fraternity of bandits, the Levantines represented the Orient, and the men of the Atlantic sea-coast represented the West. Many a Basque talked to many an Irishman; the Basque and the Irishman understood each other; they spoke the old Punic jargon; add to this the intimate relations of Catholic Ireland to Catholic Spain. Relations of such closeness that they ended by causing the hanging at London of a quasi-king of Ireland, the Gaelic lord of Brany, which brought about the earldom of Leitrim.

The Comprachicos were an association rather than a tribe, a residue rather than an association. It was all the rabble of the universe having a crime for its trade. It was a sort of harlequin nation, composed of all the tatters. To affiliate a man was to sew on another rag.

To wander was the law of existence of the Comprachicos. Appear, then disappear. Whoever is only tolerated, takes no root. Even in the kingdoms where their trade was a court-

purveyor, and, at need, an auxiliary of the royal power, they were at times suddenly ill-treated. Kings used their art and sent the artists to the galleys. These inconsistencies are in the ebb and flow of royal caprice. "For such is our good pleasure."

A rolling stone and a roaming trade gather no moss. The Comprachicos were poor. They, too, might have said what the lean and ragged witch said when she saw the torch lighted for the stake: "The game is not worth the candle." Perhaps, it is even probable, that their chiefs, who have remained unknown, the wholesale contractors of the traffic in children, were rich. It would not be easy to clear up this point, after a lapse of two centuries.

It was, as we have said, an affiliation. It had its laws, its oath, its formulas. It almost had its Cabala. Whoever would like to know much about the Comprachicos to-day, would only need to go to Biscay and to Gallicia. As there were many Basques among them, it is in those mountains that their story is to be found. They speak of Comprachicos at Oyarzun, at Urbistondo, at Less, at Astigarraga to this very hour. "*Aguardate, nino, que voy a llamar al Comprachicos*" ("Take care, child, I'll call the Comprachicos"), is the mother's cry of intimidation to children in that country.

The Comprachicos, like the Tziganes and the Gypsies, used to make appointments for meeting; from time to time the chiefs had conferences. In the seventeenth century they had four principal meeting places. One in Spain, the pass of Pancorbo; one in Germany, the forest glade called the Wicked Woman, near Diekirch, where there are two enigmatical bas-reliefs representing a woman with a head and a man without one; one in France, the hillock, where once stood the colossal statue of Massue-la-Promesse, in the ancient sacred wood of Borvo Tomona, near Bourbonne-les-Bains; one in England, behind the garden wall of William Challoner, squire of Gisbrough, at Cleveland, in York, between the square tower and the great gable with the arched door.

VI.

Laws against vagabonds have always been very rigorous in England. England in her Gothic legislation, seems to have been inspired by this principle: "*Homo errans fera errante pejor*" (a tramp is worse than a wandering wild beast). One of its special statutes qualifies the homeless man as "more dangerous than the asp, the dragon, the lynx, and the basilisk" (*atrocior aspide, dracone, lynce et basilico*). England long had the same anxiety

about Gypsies, of whom she wished to be rid, as about wolves, of which she had been cleared.

In this the Englishman differs from the Irishman, who prays to the saints for the wolf's health, and calls him "my godfather."

The English law, however, just as it tolerated, as we have seen, the tamed and domesticated wolf become a sort of dog, tolerated the vagabond by profession, become a subject. It did not molest either the mountebank, or the itinerant barber, or the quack doctor, or the peddler, or the open-air scholar, provided that each had a trade by which he lived. Further than this, and save for these exceptions, the kind of free man that there is in the wandering man, frightened the law. A stroller was a possible public enemy. That modern thing, lounging, was unknown; they knew only that ancient thing, prowling. The "suspicious look," that something, that every one understands and that no one can define, was enough to make society collar a man. "Where do you live? What do you do?" And if he could not answer, harsh penalties awaited him. Iron and fire were in the code. The law practised the cauterization of vagrancy.

Hence all over the English territory, there was a real "law against suspects" applied to vagrants who were readily malefactors, it must be owned, and particularly to Gypsies, whose

expulsion has been wrongly compared to that of the Jews and the Moors from Spain, and to that of the Protestants from France. As for us, we do not confound a *battue* with a persecution.

The Comprachicos, let us lay stress upon it, had nothing in common with the Gypsies. The Gypsies were a nation ; the Comprachicos were a compound of all nations ; a residue, as we have said ; a horrible basin of filthy waters. The Comprachicos had not, like the Gypsies, an idiom of their own ; their jargon was a promiscuous jumble of idioms : all languages mixed, made their language ; they spoke a gibberish. They had ended by becoming, like the Gypsies, a people winding their way among other nations ; but their common bond was affiliation and not race. At all epochs of history, we can discover, in that vast liquid mass called humanity, some of these venomous streams of men, flowing apart, with something poisonous about them. The Gypsies were a family ; the Comprachicos were a free-masonry ; a masonry, having not an august, but a hideous, craft. Final difference, their religion. The Gypsies were pagans, the Comprachicos were Christians ; and even good Christians ; as befits an affiliation, which, though a mixture of all peoples, had had its birth in Spain, a pious place.

They were more than Christians, they were Catholics; they were more than Catholics, they were Romans; and so pure in their faith, and so ready to take umbrage where it was concerned, that they refused to associate themselves with the Hungarian nomads of the comitate of Pesth, who were commanded and led by an old man, whose sceptre was a silver-headed staff, surmounted by the double-headed Austrian eagle. True, these Hungarians were schismatics to the degree of celebrating the Assumption on the 27th of August, which is abominable.

As long as the Stuarts reigned in England the affiliation of the Comprachicos was, for motives of which we have given a glimpse, to a certain extent protected. James II., a fervent man, who persecuted the Jews and ferreted out Gypsies, was favorable to the Comprachicos. We have seen why. The Comprachicos were purchasers of the human commodity that the King was a dealer in. They excelled in disappearances. The welfare of the State needs disappearances from time to time. An inconvenient minor heir, that they took and handled, lost his shape. This facilitated confiscations. The transfers of domains to favorites were thereby simplified. The Comprachicos were, besides, very discreet and very taciturn, bound themselves to silence,

and kept their word, which is necessary for matters of State. There was scarcely an example of their having betrayed the secrets of the King. True, it was to their interest. And if the King had lost confidence in them, they would have been in great danger. Thus they were of use from the political point of view. Moreover, these artists furnished singers for the Holy Father. The Comprachicos were useful for Allegri's *Miserere*. They were particularly devoted to the Virgin Mary. All this pleased the papistry of the Stuarts. James II. could not be hostile to religious men who carried their devotion to the Virgin so far as to manufacture eunuchs. In 1688, there was a change of dynasty in England. Orange supplanted Stuart. William III. replaced James II.

James II. went to die in exile, where miracles were performed on his tomb, and where his relics cured the bishop of Autun of the fistula, a worthy reward for the Christian virtues of that prince.

William, having neither the same ideas nor the same practices as James, was severe towards the Comprachicos. He put forth much good will for the crushing out of these vermin.

A statute of the early times of William and Mary struck the affiliation of child-buyers sharply. It was a bludgeon blow for the Comprachicos, who henceforward were pulver-

ized. By the terms of this statute, the men of this affiliation, if taken and duly convicted, were to be branded on the shoulder with a hot iron, marking the letter *R*, which signifies *Rogue;* on the left hand with a *T*, signifying *Thief;* and on the right hand with an *M*, signifying *Manslayer.* The chiefs, "presumably rich, although of a beggarly aspect," would be punished by the *collistrigium*, which is the pillory, and marked on the forehead with a *P*, besides the confiscation of their goods and the uprooting of the trees of their woods. Those who would not denounce the Comprachicos were to be "chastised by confiscation and perpetual imprisonment," just as for the crime of misprision. As for the women found among these men they were to undergo the *cucking-stool;* this is a balance, the name of which is a combination of the French word *coquine*, hussy, and the German word *Stuhl*, chair, signifies a ducking-stool. English law being gifted with an odd longevity, this punishment still exists in the legislation of England for "quarrelsome women." The cucking or ducking-stool is suspended over a river or pond, the woman is seated on it, and the chair is dropped in the water, then drawn out, and this ducking of the woman is repeated three times, "to cool her choler," says the commentator Chamberlayne.

BOOK ONE

NIGHT LESS BLACK THAN MAN

I.

THE SOUTH POINT OF PORTLAND

An obstinate north wind blew uninterruptedly over the European continent, and more roughly still over England, during all the month of December, 1689, and all the month of January, 1690. Hence the calamitous cold which made this winter noted, as "memorable to the poor," on the margin of the old Bible in the Presbyterian Chapel of the Non-Jurors of London. Thanks to the useful solidity of the antique parchment used in the official registers, long lists of poor persons found dead of hunger and nakedness are still legible to-day on many local lists, particularly in the archives of Clink Liberty Court, of the town of Southwark, of Pie Powder Court, which means Dusty Feet Court, and of White Chapel Court, held at the village of Stepney by the bailiff of the lord. The Thames froze over, a thing which does not happen once in a century, as ice forms there with difficulty on account of the action of

the sea. Carts rolled on the frozen river; there was a fair on the Thames with tents, and bear and bull-baitings; an ox was roasted whole on the ice. This thick ice lasted two months. The painful year 1690 surpassed in rigor even the celebrated winters at the opening of the seventeenth century, which have been so minutely noticed by Doctor Gideon Delaun, who was honored by the city of London with a bust and bracket, in his capacity of apothecary to King James I.

One evening, towards the close of one of the most icy days of this month of January, 1690, something unusual was happening in one of the numerous inhospitable coves of the Bay of Portland, which made the sea-mews and the wild geese screech and wheel at the entrance to the cove, without daring to fly in.

In this creek, the most perilous of all the coves of the bay, when certain winds rule, and consequently the most lonely and convenient, on account of its very danger, for ships which are hiding, a little vessel, almost alongside the cliff, thanks to the deep water, was moored to a point of rocks. It is wrong to say that night falls; we should say night rises; for it is from the earth that darkness comes. It was already night at the foot of the cliff; it was still day on top. Had any

one approached the moored vessel he would have recognized a Biscayan hooker.

The sun, hidden all day by the mist, had just set. That deep and black anguish, which might be called anxiety for the absent sun, was beginning to be felt.

As the wind did not come from the sea, the water in the creek was calm.

This was, especially in winter, a happy exception. These Portland creeks are nearly all bar-harbors. In heavy weather the sea roughens considerably, and much skill and experience are needed to pass in and out there in safety. These little ports, more apparent than real, do poor service. It is dangerous to enter, and terrible to get out of them. That particular evening, by some extraordinary circumstance, there was no peril.

The Biscayan hooker is an old model fallen into disuse. This hooker, which has done service even in the navy, was a robust hull, a bark in size, a ship in solidity. It figured in the Armada; the war-hooker reached, it is true, very heavy tonnage; thus the Admiral's ship, "Grand Griffon," commanded by Lope de Médina, registered six hundred and fifty tons and carried forty guns; but the merchant and contraband hooker was of a very feeble pattern. Sea-faring people esteemed and valued this frail model. The cordage was made

of strands of hemp, some of them with a centre of iron-wire, which indicates a probable, though rather unscientific, intention of obtaining indications in case of magnetic tensions; the delicacy of this rigging did not exclude the heavy working cables, the *cabrias* of Spanish galleys and the *cameli* of Roman triremes. The tiller was very long, which has the advantage of a great leverage, but the disadvantage of a small circle of action; two sheaves in two mortises corrected this defect, and somewhat repaired this loss of force. The compass was well housed in a perfectly square binnacle, and well balanced by its two copper frames, placed horizontally within each other, on little bolts, as in Cardan lamps. There was science and subtlety in the construction of the hooker, but it was ignorant science and barbarous subtlety. The hooker was primitive, like the prame and the pirogue, it partook of the prame by its stability, and of the pirogue by its swiftness, and had, like all vessels born of the pirate and fishing instinct, remarkable sea-going qualities. It was fit for both land-locked and open waters, its style of sails, complicated by stays, and very peculiar, permitted it to navigate closely in the land-locked bays of the Asturias, which are almost basins, as Passages, for instance, and broadly out at sea; it could sail round a lake, and sail round the world; a singular craft, fit

for two purposes, good for a pond, good for a storm. The hooker was among ships what the wagtail is among birds, one of the smallest, and one of the boldest; the wagtail, perched, hardly bends a reed, and, flying, crosses the ocean.

The Biscayan hookers, even the poorest, were gilded and painted. This tattooing is in spirit of these charming, but somewhat barbarous people. The sublime variegation of their mountains, checkered with snow and meadows, reveals to them the harsh enchantment of ornament, at all hazards.

They are indigent and magnificent; they set up coats-of-arms on their thatched cottages; they have huge asses which they bedizen with little bells, and great oxen whose heads they dress with plumes; their carts, whose wheels can be heard creaking two leagues off, are illuminated, carved and festooned with ribbons. A cobbler has a bas-relief over his door; it is Saint Crispin and an old shoe, but it is stone. They put gold braid on their leather jackets; they do not mend their rags, but they embroider them. Profound and superb gayety. The Basques, like the Greeks, are children of the sun. While the Valencian sadly drapes his nakedness in his russet blanket, in which there is an opening through which he passes his head, the people of Galicia

and Biscay delight in beautiful linen shirts bleached in the dew. Their thresholds and their windows overflow with fresh and fair faces, laughing under wreaths of maize. A proud and jovial serenity breaks forth in their simple arts, in their industries, in their customs, in the dress of the maidens, in their songs. The mountain, that colossal ruin, is all luminous in Biscay; rays of light go in and out through all its clefts. Fierce Jaïzquivel is full of idyls. Biscay is the Pyrenean grace, as Savoy is the Alpine grace. The dangerous bays that adjoin Saint-Sebastian, Leso and Fontarabia, mingle their storms, clouds, foam that dashes over the capes, rage of wave and wind, their horror and their uproar, with their rose-wreathed boat-women. Whoever has seen the Basque country, wants to see it again. It is a blessed land. Two harvests a year, gay and sonorous villages, a stately poverty, and all day Sunday, the sound of guitars, dances, castanets and love; light and clean houses and storks in the belfries.

Let us return to Portland, that rugged mountain of the sea.

The peninsula of Portland viewed geometrically presents the aspect of a bird's head, with the beak turned towards the ocean and the back of its head towards Weymouth; the isthmus is the neck.

Portland to the great sacrifice of its wildness, exists for industry to-day. The coasts of Portland were discovered by quarrymen and plasterers towards the middle of the eighteenth century. Since that time, a cement, called Roman, is made of Portland rock, a utilization which enriches the country and disfigures the bay. Two hundred years ago, these coasts were ruined like cliffs, now they are ruined like a quarry; the pick-axe bites meanly, the sea, grandly; hence a diminution of beauty. The regulated choppings of man have succeeded the magnificent wastings of the ocean. This regulated cutting has obliterated the creek where the Biscayan hooker was moored. To find any vestige of that demolished little anchorage, it would be necessary to search on the eastern coast of the peninsula, towards the point, beyond Folly Pier and Dirdle Pier, even beyond Wakeham, between the place called Church-Hop and the place called Southwell.

The creek, walled in on all sides by steep rocks higher than its width, was invaded by night more and more every moment; the indistinct mist, peculiar to twilight, was thickening; it was like a growth of darkness at the bottom of a well; the outlet of the creek to the sea, a narrow channel, drew a whitish fissure, in that almost night-like interior where the tide was flowing. One had to be quite

near to perceive the hooker, moored to the rocks, and as if hidden in their vast mantle of shadow. A plank thrown from the side to a low and flat projection of the cliff, the only place where one could get a foothold, put the bark in communication with the land; dark forms were walking and passing each other on this swaying bridge, and in this darkness people were embarking.

It was less cold in the creek than at sea, thanks to the screen of rock rising at the north of this basin; but this difference did not prevent these people from shivering. They were hurrying.

Twilight effects cut out forms as with a punching tool; certain notchings in their clothes were visible, and showed that these people belonged to the class called in England, "*the ragged.*"

The windings of a pathway could be vaguely distinguished in the projections of the cliff. A girl who lets her corset-lace hang and drag over the back of an arm-chair, unconsciously sketches nearly all cliff and mountain pathways. The pathway of this creek, full of knots and elbows, almost perpendicular, and better for goats than for men, ended in the platform where the plank was. Cliff paths are ordinarily untemptingly steep; they present themselves less as a road than as a fall;

they sink rather than go down. This one, probably a ramification of some road on the plain, was so vertical that it was disagreeable to look at. It could be seen from below reaching the high layers of the cliff in zigzags, where it passed out across crumbled rocks upon the upper plateau, by a cutting in the rock. It was by this path that the passengers, for whom the bark was waiting in that creek, had been obliged to come.

Around the movement of embarkation which was going on in the creek, and which was a visibly alarmed and uneasy movement, all was solitary. Not a step, nor a sound, nor a breath was to be heard. One could hardly perceive at the other side of the roadstead, at the entrance of Ringstead Bay, a flotilla, of shark-fishing boats, evidently astray. These polar boats had been driven from the Danish into the English waters by the caprice of the sea. Northern blasts sometimes play these tricks on fishermen. These particular ones had just taken refuge in the anchorage of Portland, a sign of presumable bad weather and peril out at sea. They were busy casting anchor. The chief bark, doing sentinel duty, according to the ancient custom of Norwegian flotillas, outlined all its rigging in black on the flat whiteness of the sea, and forward, one could see the fishing-fork

bearing all the varieties of hooks and harpoons destined for the *seymnus glacialis*, the *squalus acanthias* and the *squalus spinax niger*, and the net for taking the sun-fish. With the exception of a few other vessels, all swept into the same corner, the eye met nothing living on that vast horizon of Portland. Not a house, not a ship. The coast, at that epoch, was not inhabited, and the roadstead, at that season, was not habitable.

Whatever may have been the aspect of the weather, the beings that the hooker was to take away, hurried its departure none the less. They formed a sort of rapidly moving, confused and busy group at the seashore. It was difficult to distinguish one from the other. Impossible to see whether they were old or young. The indistinct evening mingled and blurred them. Darkness, that mask, was upon their faces. They were silhouettes in the night. There were eight; there were probably one or two women among them, not easily recognized under the rags and tatters in which the whole group was muffled, accoutrements which were no longer either the clothes of women or the raiment of men. Rags have no sex.

One smaller shadow, going and coming among the large ones, indicated a dwarf or a child.

It was a child.

II.

ISOLATION

By looking closely, this is what one could have noticed.

All wore long cloaks, torn and patched, but draped, and, at need, hiding them to the eyes, good against the north wind and curiosity. They moved with agility under these cloaks. The greater part of them wore a handkerchief rolled around the head, a sort of rudiment with which the turban begins in Spain. This headdress was nothing unusual in England. At that epoch the South was fashionable in the North. Perhaps that was because the North was beating the South. It triumphed over it and admired it. After the defeat of the Armada, Castilian was an elegant jargon at the court of Elizabeth. To speak English in the palace of the English Queen was almost "shocking." To somewhat adopt the manners of those to whom they lay down the law, is the habit of the barbarous victor towards the refined victims; the Tartar con-

templates and imitates the Chinese. That is why Castilian fashions penetrated into England, in return, English interests filtered into Spain.

One of the men of the embarking group had the look of a chief. He was shod with Spanish sandals, and bedizened with laced and gilded rags, and a spangled waistcoat, which glittered under his cloak like a fish's belly. Another pulled his immense felt hat, cut in the shape of a sombrero, down over his face. This felt hat had no hole for a pipe, which indicated a man of letters.

Over his rags, on the principle that a man's waistcoat is a child's cloak, the child was wrapped in a reefer's jacket, which reached his knees.

His size allowed one to suppose him to be a boy ten or eleven years of age. He was bare-footed.

The hooker's crew was composed of a skipper and two sailors.

The hooker, very likely, came from Spain and was returning thither. Without any doubt she carried on a stealthy service between the two coasts.

The persons she was about to take on board were whispering among themselves.

The whisperings which these beings exchanged were composite. Now a Castilian word, then a German word, again a French

word; at times Gaelic, at times Basque. It was a dialect, unless it were a professional slang.

They seemed to be of all nationalities and of the same band.

The crew probably belonged to the same affiliation. There was connivance in this embarkation.

This variegated troop seemed to be a company of comrades, perhaps a set of accomplices.

If there had been a little more light, and if one had looked somewhat curiously, half-concealed rosaries and scapularies might have been perceived on these people under their rags. One of the semblances of woman, mingled with the group, had a rosary, which, as regards the size of its beads, was almost like a dervish's rosary, and easy to recognize as an Irish rosary from Llanymthefry, which is also called Llanandiffry.

One could also have remarked, if there had been less darkness, a Nuestra Senora (Our Lady) with the nino (child) carved and gilded on the prow of the hooker. It was probably the Basque Notre-Dame, a sort of "Panagia" (a Greek name for the Virgin) of the old Cantabrians. Under this image, which took the place of a figure-head, there was a fire-cage, not lighted at this moment, an excess of precaution, which showed an extreme care for

concealment. This fire-cage evidently served two purposes; when lit it burned for the Virgin and lighted the sea, a beacon performing the duties of a wax taper.

The cut-water, long, curved, and sharp under the bow-sprit, came out of the prow like the horn of the crescent. Where the cut-water began, at the feet of the Virgin, there knelt an angel with folded wings, backed to the stem, and looking at the horizon with a spy-glass. The angel was gilded like the Virgin. There were carvings and openings in the cut-water, for the passage of waves, affording opportunities for gilding and arabesques.

Under the Virgin was written in gilded capitals the word "*Matutina*," the vessel's name, illegible at that moment, on account of the darkness.

At the foot of the cliff, the cargo, that these passengers were taking away, was deposited in the disorder and pell-mell of departure, and, thanks to the plank which served as a bridge, it was rapidly passing from the water-side to the bark. Sacks of biscuit, a keg of *stock-fisch* (codfish), a box of portable soup, three barrels, one of fresh water, one of malt, one of tar, four or five bottles of ale, an old portmanteau buckled up with straps, trunks, chests, a bale of tow for torches and signals, such was the cargo. These tatterdemalions had valises,

which seemed to indicate a roving existence; tramping beggars are forced to own something; they would like at times to fly away like birds, but they cannot, without abandoning their means of livelihood. They necessarily have boxes of tools and implements for work, whatever their wandering profession may be. These men dragged this luggage, which had been an encumbrance on more than one occasion. It could not have been easy to bring this stuff to the base of the cliff. Moreover, this revealed an intention of definite departure.

They lost no time; there was a continual passing from the shore to the ship and from the ship to the shore; each took his share of the work; one carried a sack, another a chest. The possible or probable women in this mixed crowd, worked like the rest. They overloaded the child.

It is doubtful whether this child had a father and a mother in this group. No sign of life was given to him. They made him work, nothing more. He appeared to be, not a child in a family, but a slave in a tribe. He served everyone, and no one spoke to him.

Moreover, he made haste, and like all that obscure troop, of which he formed a part, he seemed to have but one thought, to embark very quickly. Did he know why? Probably

not. He hurried mechanically. Because he saw the others hurrying.

The hooker was decked. The stowage of the freight in the hold was promptly finished, the moment for standing out to sea arrived. The last case had been carried on the deck, there was nothing to take on board but the men. The two members of the troop who seemed to be women were already aboard; six, among them the child, were still on the low platform of the cliff. The movement of departure was made in the vessel, the skipper seized the tiller, a sailor took an axe to cut the mooring cable. To cut is a sign of haste; when there is time, one unties. "*Andamos*" (Let us go), said, in a low tone, the one of the six, who appeared to be the chief, and who had spangles on his rags. The child rushed towards the plank to pass over first. As he was putting his foot on it, two of the men dashing forward, at the risk of throwing him into the water, entered before him; a third shoved him aside with his elbow and passed; the fourth pushed him back with his fist and followed the third; the fifth, who was the chief, bounded into the bark rather than entered it, and, as he leaped in, he kicked back the plank, which fell into the sea; a stroke of the axe cut the moorings, the tiller veered round, the vessel left the shore, and the child remained on land.

III.

SOLITUDE

The child remained motionless on the rock, his eye fixed. He did not call. He did not entreat. It was unexpected; nevertheless, he did not say a word. There was the same silence on board the vessel. Not one cry from the child to these men, not a farewell from these men to the child. On both sides there was a mute acceptance of the growing interval. It was like a separation of shades on the banks of a Styx. The child, as if he were nailed to the rock, which the high tide was beginning to bathe, looked at the bark as it drew off. One would have said that he understood.

What? What did he understand?

The darkness.

A moment later the hooker reached the strait which led out of the creek and entered it. The tip of the mast could be seen against the clear sky, above the cleft blocks between which the strait wound, as between two walls.

This point wandered along the top of the rocks and seemed to bury itself in them. It was seen no more. It was over. The bark had gained the sea.

The child gazed at this disappearance.

He was astonished, but pensive.

His stupefaction was complicated by a gloomy evidence of what life is. It seemed as if there were experience in this young creature. Perhaps he was already passing judgment. Trials, when they come too soon, sometimes construct, at the bottom of the obscure reflection of children, an indefinable and formidable balance, on which these poor little souls weigh God.

Feeling himself innocent, he submitted. Not a complaint. The irreproachable does not reproach.

This rough expulsion did not draw even a gesture from him. He experienced a sort of internal chill. The child did not bend under this sudden blow of fate, which seemed to put the catastrophe of his existence almost before its beginning. He received this thunderbolt, erect.

It would have been evident to any one who could have seen his astonishment, which was free from dejection, that in the group which had abandoned him, nothing loved him and he had loved nothing.

Pondering, he forgot the cold. Suddenly the water wet his feet; the tide was rising; a breath passed through his hair; the north wind was coming. He shivered. There came over him, from head to foot, that shudder, which is the awakening.

He cast his eyes around him.

He was alone.

Up to this day there had not been any other men in the world for him but those who were at this moment on the hooker. These men had just stolen away.

Let us add, strange thing to say, that these men, the only ones he knew, were unknown to him.

He could not have told who these men were.

His childhood had been spent among them, without knowing that he belonged to them. He was placed near them; nothing more.

He had just been forgotten by them.

He had no money about him, no shoes on his feet, hardly a garment on his body, not even a piece of bread in his pocket.

It was winter. It was night. He would have to walk several leagues before reaching a human dwelling.

He did not know where he was.

He knew nothing, except that those who had come with him to the shore of this sea, had gone away without him.

He felt himself placed outside of life.

He felt all humanity give way beneath him.

He was ten years old.

The child was in a desert, between depths where he saw night ascend and depths where he heard waves roar.

He stretched his thin little arms and yawned.

Then, suddenly, like some one who has made up his mind, boldly, and throwing off his numbness, and with a squirrel's agility,—perhaps, a clown's—he turned his back to the creek, and began to mount along the cliff. He scaled the path, left it, returned to it, alert and daring.

He was now hurrying towards land. One would have said that he had an itinerary. Yet he was going nowhere.

He was hastening, without an object, a sort of fugitive from destiny.

Man climbs, animals clamber, he clambered and climbed.

The steeps of Portland being turned southward, there was hardly any snow in the path. The intensity of the cold had, nevertheless, turned this snow into a powder, which was rather uncomfortable for the walker. The child managed to get through it. His man's jacket, too wide for him, was a complication and inconvenienced him. From time to time,

he encountered on an overhanging place or on a declivity, a little ice, which made him fall. He pulled himself up by a dry branch or a jutting stone after having hung over the precipice for a few moments. Once he had some trouble with a vein of breccia which suddenly crumbled under him, dragging him with it in its ruin. These breccia crumblings are treacherous. For a few seconds, the child slid like a tile on a roof; he rolled to the extreme edge of the descent; a tuft of grass which he grasped at the right moment, saved him. He no more cried out before the abyss, than he did before the men; he regained his foothold and silently reascended. The steep cliff was high. He had several such adventures. The precipice was the worse for the darkness. This vertical rock had no end.

It receded before the child into the depths above. The summit seemed to rise in the same proportion as the child rose. While he climbed, he watched that black entablature placed as a barrier between the sky and him. At last he reached the top.

He leaped on the plateau. We might almost say that he landed, for he came out the precipice.

He was hardly out of the steep path when he shivered. He felt the north wind, that bite of the night, on his face. The sharp

north-west was blowing. He tightened his sailor's jacket on his chest.

It was a good garment. On board ship it is called a sou'wester, because this kind of jacket is not easily penetrated by the south-west rains.

The child after reaching the plateau stopped, placed his two naked feet firmly on the frozen soil, and looked.

Behind him the sea, before him the land, over his head the sky. But a sky without stars. An opaque mist masked the zenith.

On coming to the top of the rocky wall, he found himself turned towards the land, and he looked at it. It was before him, as far as the eye could reach, flat, frozen, covered with snow.

A few tufts of heather were shivering. No roads to be seen. Nothing. Not even a shepherd's cot. Here and there pale spiral circlings could be seen, which were whirlwinds of fine snow, torn from the ground by the wind and flying away. A succession of undulations of the land, which had suddenly become misty, made folds on the horizon. The great wan plains were lost beneath the white fog. Deep silence. It spread out like infinity, and was as quiet as the tomb.

The child turned around towards the sea.

The sea like the earth was white, one with

snow, the other with foam. There is nothing so melancholy as the light made by this double whiteness. Certain nocturnal lights have a very distinct harshness; the sea was of steel, the cliffs were of ebony. From the height where the child stood, the Bay of Portland looked almost like a geographical map, wan in its semi-circle of hills; there was something of a dream in this nocturnal landscape, a pale curve enclosed in a dark crescent; the moon sometimes presents this aspect. From one cape to another, along all that coast, not a single glimmer indicated a kindled hearth, a lighted window, a living house. Absence of light on earth as well as in the sky; not a lamp below, not a star above. The wide smoothness of the waves in the bay had sudden risings here and there. The wind disturbed and ruffled this sheet. The hooker was still visible in the bay as she fled.

It was a black triangle gliding over the livid waste.

Far away, stretches of water moved confusedly in the ominous transparent shadows of immensity.

The *Matutina* sailed fast. She grew smaller from minute to minute. Nothing is so rapid as the melting away of a vessel into the distances of the sea.

At a certain moment she lighted the beacon

at her prow; it is probable that the darkness was becoming disquieting around her, and that the pilot felt the need of lighting up the waters. This luminous point, a scintillation seen from afar, clung mournfully to her high, long, black shape. One would have said that it was a shroud, erect and walking in the midst of the sea, under which some one was prowling with a star in his hand.

An impending storm made itself felt in the air. The child did not notice it, but a sailor would have trembled. It was that preliminary moment of anxiety, when it seems as if the elements were about to become individuals, and that one was to witness the mysterious transformation of the wind into Aquilo. The sea is going to be Ocean, the powers are going to reveal themselves as wills, what one takes for a thing, is a soul. It is about to become visible. Hence the horror. The soul of man dreads to be thus confronted with the soul of Nature.

A chaos was about to make its entrance. The wind, rumpling up the fog and piling up the clouds behind, was setting the stage scenery for that terrible drama of waves and winter, which is called a snow-storm.

The symptom of vessels putting back manifested itself. Within the last few moments the roadstead was no longer deserted. Every

instant, anxious barks rose from behind the capes, hastening towards the anchorage. Some doubled Portland Bill, others Saint Alban's Head. Sails were coming from the most extreme distance. It was a race for refuge.

At the south, the darkness grew thicker and the clouds, full of night, came closer to the sea. The weight of the overhanging and suspended tempest gloomily appeased the waves. This was not the time for setting out. Yet the hooker had gone.

She had made the south of the cape. She was already out of the bay and on the open sea. All at once the wind blew up a squall; the *Matutina*, which could still be clearly distinguished, set all her sails, as if resolved to profit by the hurricane. It was a northwester, a sullen, wrathful wind. The nor'-wester at once began a furious attack on the hooker. The hooker caught on the flank, leaned over, but did not hesitate, and kept on her course towards the sea. This indicated a flight more than a voyage, less fear of sea than of land, and more anxiety about the pursuit of men than of the winds.

The hooker, passing through all the stages of decrease, sank on the horizon; the little star she dragged in the gloom, paled; the hooker, more and more amalgamated with night, disappeared.

This time, it was forever.

At least, the child seemed to understand it so. He ceased looking at the sea. His eyes went back to the plains, the moors, the hills, towards the stretches where it was not impossible, perhaps, to meet something living. He started for this unknown region.

IV.

QUESTIONS

What was this sort of fugitive band leaving this child behind it?

Were these runaways, Comprachicos?

The details have been given above of the measures taken by William III., and passed in Parliament against the malefactors, men and women, called Comprachicos, called Compra-pequenos, called Cheylas.

There are legislations which scatter.

This statute falling on the Comprachicos led to a general flight, not only of Comprachicos, but of all sorts of vagabonds. There was an absolute race in escaping and embarking. The greater part of the Comprachicos returned to Spain. Many, as we have said, were Basques.

This law to protect childhood had a singular primary result; a sudden abandonment of children.

This penal statute immediately produced a multitude of foundlings, that is to say, lost children. Nothing easier to understand.

Every wandering troop containing a child was suspected; the mere fact of the child's presence denounced it. "They are probably Comprachicos." Such was the first idea of the sheriff, the provost, the constable. Hence arrests and inquiries. People who were simply poor, reduced to prowling and begging, were seized with terror lest they might be taken for Comprachicos, although they were none; but the weak are not easily reassured as to the possible errors of justice. Besides, vagabond families are habitually timid. That with which the Comprachicos were charged, was their trading in other people's children. But the promiscuousness of distress and indigence is such, that sometimes it would not have been easy for a father and a mother to prove that their child was their own. How did you come by this child? How prove that it came from God? The child became a danger; they got rid of it. To flee alone was easier. The father and the mother made up their minds to lose it, sometimes in a wood, sometimes on a beach, sometimes in a well.

Drowned children were found in cisterns.

Let us add that, thenceforth, in imitation of England, the Comprachicos were hunted down all over Europe. The general signal for pursuit had been given. There is nothing like taking the first step in a difficult enterprise:

belling the cat. Henceforth, there was rivalry among all police forces in seizing them, and the alguazil was not less on the watch than the constable. Only twenty-three years ago, there could still be read on one of the stones of the gate of Otero, an untranslatable inscription—the words of the code defy decency—wherein, moreover, a strong penal difference marks the shade between dealers in children and stealers of children. Here is the inscription in rather brutal Spanish: *Aqui quedan las orejas de los Comprachicos, y las bolsas de los robaninos. Mientras que se van ellos al trabajo de mar.* As will be seen, the confiscated ears, etc., did not prevent them from being sent to the galleys.

Hence a wild flight among the vagabonds. They departed frightened; they arrived trembling. All along the coast of Europe stealthy landings were closely watched. It was impossible for a band to embark with a child, because it was perilous to land with one.

To lose the child was sooner done.

By whom had the child, that we have just had a glimpse of, in the gloom of the solitudes of Portland, been cast off?

According to all appearances, by the Comprachicos.

V.

THE TREE OF HUMAN INVENTION

It might have been about seven o'clock in the evening. The wind was lessening, a sign that it would soon increase in violence. The child was on the extreme southern plateau of Portland Point.

Portland is a peninsula. But the child was ignorant of what a peninsula is, and did not even know the word, Portland. He knew only one thing, which is, that one can walk till one drops. An idea is a guide; he had no idea. They had brought him there and left him there. *They* and *there*, these two enigmas, represented all his destiny; *they* were the human kind; *there* was the universe. He had absolutely no other point of support except the little quantity of earth on which he set his heel, a hard and cold earth to the nakedness of his feet. In this great dim world, open on all sides, what was there for this child? Nothing.

He was walking towards this nothing.

The immense abandonment of mankind was around him.

He crossed the first plateau diagonally, then a second, then a third. At the extremity of each plateau, the child found a break in the ground; the slope was sometimes abrupt, but always short. The high bare plains of Portland Point resemble great over-lapping paving-stones; the southern side seems to enter under the preceding plain, and the northern side rises above the following one. This forms projections which the child cleared with agility. From time to time he halted in his progress and seemed to hold counsel with himself. The night was becoming very dark, his range of vision was shortening, he could see but a few paces ahead.

Suddenly he stopped, listened a moment, and with an almost imperceptible, yet contented, nod, turned quickly, and directed his steps towards an eminence of moderate height, which he perceived confusedly on his right, at the point of the plain nearest the cliff. On that eminence there was a form that seemed, through the mist, a tree. The child had just heard a sound from that side, which was neither the sound of the wind, nor the sound of the sea. Neither was it the cry of an animal. He thought there was some one there.

A few strides took him to the foot of the hillock.

There was some one there, indeed.

That which was indistinct at the top of the eminence was visible now.

It was something like a great arm, coming quite straight out of the ground. At the upper extremity of this arm, a sort of forefinger, supported from beneath by a thumb, was stretched out horizontally. This arm, this thumb, and this forefinger outlined a square against the sky. At the point of junction of this sort of forefinger and this sort of thumb, there was a thread from which hung an unknown black and shapeless something. This thread, moved by the wind, made a noise like a chain.

It was this noise, the child had heard.

The thread, when seen near by, was what its sound had proclaimed it, a chain. A ship's chain with flat rings.

By that mysterious law of amalgamation, which all through nature superposes appearances upon realities, the place, the hour, the mist, the tragic sea, the visionary distant agitation of the horizon, added themselves to this profile and made it enormous.

The mass bound to the chain presented the appearance of a sheath. It was swaddled like an infant, and as long as a man. On top

there was a rounded part, about which the extremity of the chain was wound. The lower part of the sheath was jagged. Between the rents fleshless extremities protruded.

A feeble breeze shook the chain, and what hung from the chain swayed gently. This passive mass obeyed the vague motions of space; it had something frightful about it; horror, which alters the proportion of objects, took away its dimensions and left it only its shape; it was a condensation of blackness having an aspect; there was night above and night within it; it was a prey to sepulchral exaggeration; twilights, moonrises, setting of constellations behind the cliffs, the floating things in space, the clouds, all the winds of the compass, had ended by entering into the composition of this visible nothing; this sort of log hanging in the wind, participated in the impersonality scattered afar on the sea and in the sky, and darkness completed this thing which had been a man.

It was that which is no more.

To be a remainder, this is beyond expression by the human tongue. No longer to exist and yet to persist, to be in the abyss and out of it, to reappear above death, as if unsubmergible; there is a certain quantity of the impossible mingled with such reality. Hence they become unspeakable. This being—was

it a being?—this black witness, was a remainder, and a terrible remainder. Remainder of what? Of nature, first; of society, next. Zero and total.

Absolute inclemency had it at its disposal. The deep oblivion of solitude environed it. It was given up to the chances of the unknown. It was without defence against darkness, which did with it as it would. It was forever the sufferer. It endured. The hurricanes were upon it. Dismal function of the gales.

This spectre was there for general plunder. It submitted to that horrible outrage, decay, in the open air. It was an outlaw of the coffin. It had annihilation without peace. In summer, it fell into dust, and in winter, into mud. Death should have a veil; the tomb should have its modesty. Here there was neither modesty nor a veil. Cynical and avowed putrefaction. It is effrontery in Death to show his work. It insults all the serenities of gloom, when it works outside of its laboratory, the tomb.

This dead creature was despoiled. To despoil remains, inexorable end. Its marrow was no longer in its bones; its entrails were no longer in its body; its voice was no longer in its throat. A corpse is a pocket that death turns inside out and empties. If it had had a me, where was that me? Still there, perhaps,

and it was painful to think it. Something wandering around, something chained. Can one imagine a more funereal feature in the darkness?

Realities exist here below which are like outlets to the unknown, through which an issue of thought seems possible, and whither hypothesis rushes. Conjecture has its *compelle intrare* (forced entrances). Passing through certain places and before certain objects, one cannot choose but stop, a prey to dreams, and allow one's mind to advance within. There are dark doors, ajar into the invisible. No one could have met this dead man without meditating.

Vast dispersion was silently wearing him away. He had had blood, which had been drunk; skin, which had been eaten; flesh, which had been stolen. Nothing had passed without taking something from him. December had borrowed cold from him; midnight, terror; iron, rust; plague, miasmas; the flower, perfumes. His slow disintegration was a toll. Toll of the corpse to the storm, to the rain, to the dew, to the reptiles, to the birds. All the dark hands of night had rifled this dead man.

He was, indeed, an indescribably strange resident, this resident of night. He was on a plain and on a hill, and he was not there. He was palpable and vanished. He was shadow

deepening the darkness. After the disappearance of daylight, in the vast silent obscurity, he harmonized gloomily with everything. He augmented, by the mere fact of being there, the mournfulness of the storm and the calm of the stars. The unutterable, which is in the desert, condensed itself in him. Waif of an unknown destiny, he added himself to all the savage reticences of night. In his mystery there was a vague reverberation of all enigmas.

All around him was felt something like a decrease of life, which went to the deepest depths. In the surrounding expanse there was a diminution of certainty and confidence. The shiver of the underbrush and the grasses, a desolate melancholy, an anxiety, in which seemed to be a consciousness, tragically fitted all the landscape to that black figure suspended to that chain. The presence of a spectre on the horizon is an aggravation of solitude.

He was a symbol. Having upon him winds which were never at rest, he was the implacable. Eternal trembling made him terrible. He seemed a centre in space, which is a fearful thing to say, and something immense rested on him. Who knows? Perhaps equity, which we dimly see and defy, and which is beyond our justice. There was, in his duration outside of the tomb, some of man's ven-

geance and some of his own. In this twilight, and in this desert, he bore testimony. He was the proof of disquieting matter, for that before which we tremble is the ruined dwelling of a soul. For dead matter to agitate us, spirit must once have dwelt in it. He denounced the lower law to the higher. Put there by man, he awaited God. Above him, there floated, with all the indistinct convolutions of cloud and wave, the enormous reveries of darkness.

Behind this vision there was some indescribably sinister secret. The unlimited, bounded by nothing, neither by a tree, nor a roof, nor a passer-by, was around this dead man. When the mysteries overhanging us, sky, abyss, life, tomb, eternity, appear patent, it is then that we feel all to be inaccessible, all forbidden, all walled in. There is no more formidable closure, than infinity when it opens.

VI.

BATTLE BETWEEN DEATH AND NIGHT

The child was before this thing, mute, astonished, with fixed eyes.

For a man it would have been a gibbet, for the child it was an apparition.

Where a man would have seen a corpse, the child saw a phantom.

And, besides, he did not understand.

The fascinations of the abyss are of all kinds; there was one on the top of that hill. The child took one step, then two. He went up, though he felt like going down, and went nearer, though he felt like moving away.

He came, quite close, bold and quivering, to survey the phantom.

When he reached the gibbet, he raised his head and examined.

The phantom was tarred. It shone here and there. The child could distinguish the face. It was coated with bitumen, and this mask, which seemed viscous and sticky, modeled itself into form, in the moving

shadows of the night. The child saw the mouth which was a hole, the nose which was a hole, and the eyes which were holes. The body was wrapped and as if tied in a coarse canvas soaked in naphtha. This canvas had grown mouldy and broken. A knee passed through it. A crack allowed the ribs to be seen. Some parts were corpse, others skeleton. The face was earth-colored, slugs which had wandered over it, had left vague silvery ribbons upon it. The canvas, sticking to the bones, presented reliefs, like the draping of a statue. The skull, cracked and split, had gaps like rotten fruit. The teeth had remained human, they had preserved a laugh. The remnant of a cry seemed to sound in the open mouth. There were a few hairs of beard on the cheeks. The inclined head had an air of attention.

Some repairs had recently been made. The face was freshly tarred, as was also the knee which came out of the canvas, and the ribs. Below, the feet protruded.

Just underneath, in the grass, two shoes, which had become shapeless in the snow and under the rains, were to be seen. These shoes had fallen from this dead man.

The bare-footed child looked at those shoes.

The wind, growing more and more threatening, had those pauses which are a part of the

preparations for a tempest; it had entirely ceased for the last few moments. The corpse no longer stirred. The chain had all the immobility of a plummet-line.

Like all newcomers into life, and taking into account the special pressure of his destiny, the child had, without any doubt, that awakening of ideas in him which is peculiar to youthful years, which seeks to open the brain, and which resembles the pecking of the bird in the egg; but all that there was in his little consciousness at this moment, was resolved into stupor. Excess of sensation has the same effect as a surplus of oil, it ends by putting out thought. A man would have asked himself questions, the child asked none; he looked.

The tar gave that face a wet look. Drops of bitumen, congealed in what had been the eyes, resembled tears. Besides, thanks to this bitumen, the ravages of death were visibly retarded if not annulled, and reduced to the least possible decay. That which the child had before him, was a thing which was being cared for. This man was evidently precious. They had not been anxious to keep him alive, but they were anxious to preserve him dead.

The gibbet was old, worm-eaten, but solid, and had served for many long years.

It was an immemorial custom in England

to tar smugglers. They were hanged on the seashore; they were tarred, and they were left hanging; examples need to be kept out-doors, and tarred examples keep better. This tarring was humane. In this way they did not need to renew the hanged men so frequently.

Gibbets were placed at stated distances along the coast, as lamp-posts are placed now. The hanged man took the place of the lantern. He lighted his comrades, the smugglers, after his own fashion. The smugglers could see the gibbets, from afar, at sea.

There is one, first warning; then another, second warning. This did not prevent smuggling; but public order is made up of such things. This fashion lasted up to the beginning of this century. In 1822, one could still see three varnished hanged men before Dover castle. However, the preserving process was not limited to smugglers. England put her thieves, incendiaries, and assassins to the same use. John Painter, who set fire to the naval storehouses of Portsmouth, was hanged and tarred in 1776.

Abbé Coyer, who calls him Jean Le Peintre, saw him again in 1777. John Painter was hung up and chained over the ruins he had made, and retarred from time to time. This corpse lasted, one might almost say, lived, nearly fourteen years. It still did good ser-

vice in 1788. In 1790, however, it had to be replaced. The Egyptians valued the mummy of a king; a commoner's mummy may, as it appears, be useful too.

The wind having a strong hold on the hillock, had carried off all the snow. The grass showed, with a few thistles here and there. The hill was covered with that close, short, marine turf, which makes the tops of cliffs look like green cloth. Under the gibbet, at the very spot above which the feet of the executed man hung, there was a high, thick tuft, surprising on this meagre soil. The corpses that had crumbled away there for centuries, explained the beauty of this grass. The earth lives on man.

A dismal fascination held the child. He remained there, open-mouthed. He only lowered his forehead a moment for a nettle that stung his legs, and which felt like an insect. Then he straightened up again. He looked above him at the face which was looking at him. It looked all the more because it had no eyes. It was a general look, of an unspeakable fixity, in which there was both light and darkness, and which came out of the skull and the teeth, as well as out of the empty sockets. The whole head of a dead man looks, and that is terrifying. No eyeball, and you feel yourself seen. Horror of spectres.

Little by little, the child himself became terrible. He no longer stirred. Torpor was gaining upon him. He did not notice that he was losing consciousness. He was becoming numb and stiff. Winter was silently betraying him to night, for Winter is something of a traitor. The child was almost a statue. The stoniness of cold was entering his bones; darkness, that reptile, was creeping into him. The drowsiness which emanates from snow rises in man like a dark tide; the child was slowly invaded by an immobility resembling that of the spectre itself. He was about to fall asleep.

The finger of death is in the hand of sleep. The child felt himself seized by that hand. He was on the point of falling under the gibbet. He no longer knew that he was standing.

The end, always impending; no transition between being and not being; the return to the crucible, a possible slip at any moment; such a precipice is creation.

Another instant, and the child and the dead man, life in its rough draft and life in ruins, would be confounded in the same obliteration.

The spectre appeared to understand this and not to wish it. All at once, it began to move. One would have said that it was warning the child. It was the wind beginning to blow again.

Nothing could be stranger than this corpse moving.

The corpse at the end of the chain, impelled by the invisible breath, took an oblique attitude, rose on the left, then fell back, rose again on the right, and fell back and reascended with the slow and funereal precision of a clapper. A wild swinging. It seemed as though one saw the pendulum of eternity's clock in the gloom.

This lasted for some time. The child, before this swinging of the dead man, felt himself awaking, and through his numbness felt thoroughly frightened. At each oscillation, the chain grated with hideous regularity. It seemed to take breath, and then begin again. This creaking imitated the chirp of a cricket.

The approach of a squall produces sudden puffs of wind. The breeze abruptly became a gale. The swinging of the corpse was dismally emphasized. It was no longer a swaying, it was a series of shocks. The chain, which had grated, now shrieked.

It seemed that this shriek was heard. If it was a call, it was obeyed. From the depths of the horizon a great noise came rushing up.

It was a sound of wings.

An incident was at hand—the stormy incident of cemeteries and solitudes—the arrival of a flock of ravens.

Black, flying spots pricked the clouds, pierced the mist, grew in size, drew nearer, amalgamated, thickened, hastening towards the hill, uttering cries. It was like the coming of a legion. These winged vermin of darkness swooped down upon the gibbet.

The scared child fell back.

Swarms obey commands. The ravens were grouped on the gibbet. Not one was on the corpse. They were talking among themselves. Croaking is frightful. To howl, to whistle, to roar, is life; croaking is a satisfied acceptance of putrefaction. In it, you can fancy hearing the sound that the tomb makes when it breaks silence. Croaking is a voice in which there is something night-like. The child was frozen.

More with terror than with cold.

The ravens fell silent. One of them hopped on the skeleton. This was a signal. All precipitated themselves; there was a cloud of wings, then all the feathers were closed again, and the hanged man disappeared beneath a swarm of black blisters stirring in the darkness. At this moment, the dead man shook himself.

Was it he? Was it the wind? He gave a frightful bound. The hurricane, which was rising, came to his aid. The phantom fell into convulsions. It was the squall, already

blowing with the full force of its lungs, which took hold of it and tossed it in every direction. He became horrible. He began to struggle. A frightful jumping-jack, having the chain of a gibbet for its string. Some parodist of the darkness had seized its thread and was playing with this mummy. It turned and leaped as if ready to dislocate itself. The frightened birds flew away. It was like a rebound of all these filthy creatures. Then they returned and a struggle began.

The dead man seemed possessed with a monstrous life. The gusts lifted him as if they were going to carry him off; one would have said that he was resisting and making efforts to escape; his iron collar held him back. The birds reflected all his movements, retreating, then dashing forward, scared and intent. On one side, a strange attempt at flight; on the other, the pursuit of a chained thing. The dead man, impelled by all the spasms of the gale, had starts, shocks, fits of rage, came, went, rose, fell, driving back the scattered swarm. The dead man was a club, the swarm was dust. The fierce assailing flock did not loose its hold, and obstinately persisted. The dead man, as if seized with madness under this pack of beaks, multiplied his blind blows into space, which were like the blows of a stone fastened to a sling. At times he had

upon him all the claws and all the wings, then nothing; these were the retreats of the horde, immediately followed by a furious return. Frightful torture continuing after life. The birds seemed frantic. The fissures of hell must give passage to such swarms. Blows of claws, blows of beak, croakings, rendings of strips which were no longer flesh, creakings of the gibbet, rustling of the skeleton, clankings of iron, shrieks of the gale, tumult—no struggle could be more dismal. A spectre against demons. A sort of spectral combat.

At times, the gale redoubling, the hanged man pivoted on himself, faced the swarm on all sides at once, and seemed to want to run after the birds, and one would have said that his teeth tried to bite. He had the wind for him and the chain against him, as if the black deities were taking part in the fray. The hurricane was in the battle. The dead man writhed, the flock of birds wound about him spirally. It was a whirl in a whirlwind.

A vast grumble was audible below; that was the sea.

The child saw this dream. Suddenly he began to tremble in every limb, a shiver ran along his body, he tottered, staggered, nearly fell, turned around, clasped his forehead with his two hands, as if this were a point of sup-

port, and haggard, his hair streaming in the wind, going down hill with great strides, his eyes closed, almost a phantom himself, he took flight, leaving this torment behind him in the night.

VII.

THE NORTH POINT OF PORTLAND

He ran until he was breathless, at random, beside himself, in the snow, on the plain, through space. This flight warmed him. He needed it. Without this run and without this fright, he would have died.

When his breath failed, he stopped. But he did not dare to look behind him. It seemed to him that the birds must be pursuing him, that the dead man must have untied his chain and was probably moving his way, and that no doubt the gibbet itself was coming down hill, running after the dead man. He was afraid of seeing all this, if he turned around.

When he had somewhat regained his breath, he started on his flight anew.

Childhood does not account for facts. He received his impressions through the exaggeration of fright, but without uniting them in his mind, and without drawing any conclusions. He was going never mind where, nor how; he ran with the agony and difficulty of dreams.

During the three hours, since his abandonment, his progress onward, while still remaining vague, had changed its purpose; at first he had been in quest, now he was in flight. He was no longer either hungry, or cold; he was afraid. One instinct had replaced another. His whole thought now, was to escape. Escape from what? From everything. Around him, in all directions, life seemed to him a horrible wall. If he could have run away from things, he would have done it.

But children do not know that breaking out of prison which we call suicide.

He was running.

He ran on so for an indefinite time. But breath exhausts itself, and so does fear.

All at once, as if seized with a sudden access of energy and intelligence, he stopped, one would have said that he was ashamed of running away; he drew himself up, stamped his foot, raised his head resolutely and turned around.

There was no more hill, nor gibbet, nor flight of ravens.

The fog had once more taken possession of the horizon.

The child pursued his way.

Now he no longer ran, he walked. To say that this meeting with a corpse had made a man of him, would be to limit the many-sided

and confused impression, which he experienced. There was much more and much less, in this impression. That gibbet, a very unclear thing, in that rudiment of comprehension, his thought, remained an apparition for him. But a conquered terror being a support, he felt himself stronger. If he had been old enough to sound himself, he would have found within himself a thousand other beginnings of meditation, but the reflections of children are formless, and at the utmost they have the bitter after-taste of that, for them, obscure thing, which man, later on, calls indignation.

Let us add that a child has the faculty of accepting the end of a sensation very quickly. The distant and fading outlines, which make the fulness of sad things, escape him. A child is protected by his limitation, weakness, against all too complex emotions. He sees the fact, and very little besides. The difficulty of being satisfied with partial ideas does not exist for the child. The law-suit of life is conducted only later on, when experience comes with its discernments. Then there is a confrontation of the groups of encountered facts, the well-informed and grown-up intelligence compares, the recollections of youth reappear under the passions, as the palimpsest reappears under erasures, these recollections are a basis for logic, and that which was a

vision in the brain of the child, becomes a syllogism in the brain of the man. However, experience is various, and turns to good or bad, according to dispositions. The good ones ripen. The bad, rot.

The child had surely run a quarter of a league, and walked another. Suddenly, he felt a gnawing in his stomach. A thought, which at once eclipsed the hideous apparition of the hill, came to him violently: that of eating. Fortunately, there is an animal nature in man; it brings him back to reality.

But what to eat? and where to eat? and how to eat?

He felt his pockets. Mechanically, for he knew very well that they were empty.

Then he quickened his steps. Without knowing whither he was going, he quickened his steps, towards the possible lodging.

This faith in an inn is a part of the roots of Providence in man.

To believe in a shelter, is to believe in God.

But on that snowy plain there was nothing that resembled a roof.

The child walked on, the moor continued bare, as far as eye could reach.

There had never been a human habitation on this plateau. It was at the foot of the cliff, in holes in the rock, for lack of wood to build themselves cabins, that the ancient primitive

inhabitants dwelt of yore, who had as a weapon, a sling; as fuel, dried ox-dung; as religion, the idol Heil, which stood in a forest glade at Dorchester, and as occupation, the fishery of that false gray coral that the Gaels call *plin*, and the Greeks, *isidis plocamos*.

The child found his way as well as he could. All our destiny is a cross-road, the choice of direction is perilous, this little creature had his option among obscure chances early. He advanced, however, but though his legs seemed of steel, he began to grow tired. There were no paths in this plain; if there had been any, the snow had effaced them. By instinct, he continued to incline towards the east.

Sharp stones had cut his heels. If it had been light, one could have seen in the tracks he left on the snow, pink spots, which were his blood.

He recognized nothing. He was crossing the plateau of Portland from south to north, and it is probable that the band, with which he had come, to avoid meetings, had crossed it from west to east. They had most likely started in some fishing or smuggling bark, from some point on the coast of Uggescombe, such as Saint-Catherine's Chap or Swancry, to meet the hooker at Portland, which was awaiting them, and they must have landed in one of the coves of Weston, to re-embark in

one of the creeks of Easton. That direction was crossed at right angles, by the one that the child was now following. It was impossible for him to recognize his road.

The plateau of Portland has high mounds here and there, abruptly ended by the coast and cut perpendicularly on the sea-side. The wandering child came to one of these culminating points, and stopped there, hoping to find more indications in a wider space, trying to see something. He had before him, for his whole horizon, a vast livid opaqueness. He examined it attentively, and under the fixedness of his gaze it became less indistinct. At the base of a distant fold of land, towards the east, at the base of that opaque lividity, a sort of pale and shifting steep, which looked like a cliff of night, there crept and floated vague black strips, scattered fragments, as it were. This wan opaqueness was fog; these black strips were smoke. Where there is smoke, there are men. The child turned his steps that way.

At some distance he dimly saw a slope, and at the foot of the slope, amid the shapeless conformations of the rocks, blurred by the mist, something like a sand-bank or tongue of land, which probably united the plateau he had just crossed with the plains of the horizon. It was evidently necessary to go that way.

He had, in fact, reached the isthmus of Portland, a diluvial alluvium, called Chess-Hill.

He began to descend the land-side of the plateau.

The slope was difficult and rough. It was, with less ruggedness, however, the reverse of the ascent that he had made to get out of the creek. Every ascent is balanced by a descent. After having climbed up, he tumbled down.

He leaped from one rock to the other at the risk of a sprain, at the risk of falling into the indistinct depth. To save himself on the slippery places on the rock and the ice, he grasped handfuls of the long moor thongs and of thorny furze, and all these points pierced his fingers. At times he found a gently inclined bit of road, and went down, taking breath; then came more steepness, and he needed an expedient for each step. In the descent of precipices, every movement is the solution of a problem. One must be skilful under penalty of death. The child solved these problems with an instinct that a monkey would have noticed, and a science that a rope-walker would have admired. The descent was abrupt and long. Nevertheless, he was getting to the end of it.

Little by little, he approached the moment,

when he would land upon the isthmus of which he had caught a glimpse.

At intervals, while leaping or coming down from rock to rock, he listened, with the head-movement of an attentive deer. He was listening to a diffused and weak sound at a distance on his left, like the deep tone of a clarion. There was, in fact, that movement of gusts in the air which precedes the frightful north wind, which is heard rushing from the Pole like a coming of trumpets. At the same time, the child now and then felt upon his brow, upon his eyes, upon his cheeks, something which resembled the palms of cold hands being laid upon his face. They were large frozen flakes, softly sowed at first in space, then whirling and announcing the snow-storm. The child was covered with them. The snow-storm, which for more than an hour had been at sea, began to gain the land. It was slowly invading the plains. It was entering the plateau of Portland, obliquely, by the north-west.

BOOK TWO

THE HOOKER AT SEA

I.

LAWS WHICH ARE BEYOND MAN

The snow-storm is one of the unknown things of the sea. It is the most obscure of meteors: obscure in every sense of the word. It is a mixture of fog and storm, and not even in our days can we give a good explanation of this phenomenon. Hence, many disasters.

Men try to explain everything by the wind and by the tide. Now, in the air there is a force which is not the wind, and in the water there is a force which is not the tide. This force, the same in the air and in the water, is effluvium. The air and the water are two almost identical liquid masses, entering into each other by condensation and dilatation, so much so, that to breathe is to drink; effluvium alone is fluid. The wind and the tide are only impulsions; effluvium is a current. The wind is visible by clouds, the tide is visible by foam; effluvium is invisible. From time to time, however, it says: "I am here." Its *I am here*, is a thunder-clap.

The snow-storm presents a problem analogous to dry fog. If the explanation of the *callina* of the Spaniards and of the *quobar* of the Ethiopians be possible, most certainly, this explanation will be made by the attentive observation of the magnetic effluvium.

Without effluvium, a host of facts remain enigmatical. Strictly speaking, the changes in the velocity of the wind, varying in a storm from three feet a second, to two hundred and twenty feet, would account for the variations in the waves from three inches, in a calm sea, to thirty-six feet, in a furious sea; strictly speaking, the horizontality of winds, even in a squall, makes one understand how a wave thirty feet high can be fifteen hundred feet long; but why are the waves of the Pacific four times higher near America than near Asia? That is to say, higher at the west than at the east? Why is it the contrary in the Atlantic? Why is the middle of the sea, the highest under the Equator? Whence come these displacements of the ocean's swell? This is what magnetic effluvium, combined with terrestrial rotation and sidereal attraction, can alone explain.

Is not this mysterious complication necessary to account for an oscillation of wind going for example, by the west, from the south-east to the north-east, then returning

sharply, by the same great turn, from the north-east to the south-east, so as to make a prodigious circuit of five hundred and sixty degrees in thirty-six hours, which was the preface to the great snow-storm of the 17th of March, 1867?

The storm-waves of Australia attain a height of eighty feet; that is on account of its vicinity to the Pole. Storms in those latitudes are less the result of the commotion of the winds than of the continuity of sub-marine electric discharges. In the year 1866, the Transatlantic Cable was regularly disturbed in its functions two hours out of the twenty-four, from noon to two o'clock, by a sort of intermittent fever. Certain compositions and decompositions of forces produce phenomena, and impose themselves on the calculations of mariners under penalty of shipwreck. The day that navigation, which is routine, becomes mathematical; the day when we will seek to know, for instance, why warm winds sometimes come from the north and cold winds from the south in our climate; the day when we will understand that the decrease of temperature is proportioned to oceanic depths; the day when we will bear in mind, that the globe is a vast magnet, polarized in immensity, with two axes, one axis of rotation, and one axis of effluvium, intersecting each other

at right angles in the centre of the earth, and that the magnetic poles revolve around the geographical poles; when those who risk their lives will risk it scientifically; when they will navigate upon an instability which has been studied; when the captain will be a meteorologist, and the pilot will be a chemist, then many catastrophes will be avoided. The sea is just as magnetic as it is aquatic; an ocean of forces floats, unknown, in the ocean of waves; with the stream, one might say. To see in the ocean nothing but a mass of water, that is not seeing the sea at all; the sea is an ebb and flow of fluid, as much as a flux and reflux of liquid; attractions complicate it more than hurricanes, perhaps; molecular adhesion, manifested, among other phenomena, by capillary attraction, which is microscopic for us, shares in the grandeur of the ocean's expanse and the waves of effluvia, now aid and again oppose, the waves of air and the waves of water. Whoever ignores electric law, ignores hydraulic law; for one interpenetrates the other. There is no study more arduous or obscure, it is true, it borders on empiricism as astronomy borders on astrology. Without this study, however, no navigation.

This said, let us pass on.

One of the most formidable compounds of the sea, is the snow-storm. The snow-storm is

above all, magnetic. The Pole produces it, as it produces the aurora borealis: it is in that fog as well as in that light; and in the snow-flake as well as in the streak of flame, the effluvium is visible.

Storms are the nervous attacks and the delirious fits of the sea. The sea has its megrims. Storms can be compared to maladies. Some are mortal, others are not; one gets over the latter, and not the former. The snow-squall is considered to be generally mortal. Jarabija, one of the pilots of Magellan, qualified it as *una nube salida del mal lado del diablo* ("a cloud out of the devil's bad side").

Surcouf used to say: "There is something of the cholera-morbus in that sort of tempest."

Ancient Spanish navigators called that kind of squall *la Nevada* when snow-flakes fell, and *la Helada* when hail-stones fell. According to them, bats fell from the sky with the snow.

Snow-storms are peculiar to polar latitudes. Sometimes, however, they slip, one might almost say, they roll down, to our climate, so greatly is ruin mingled with the hazards of the air.

The *Matutina*, as we have seen, had, on leaving Portland, resolutely faced this great

nocturnal risk, which was aggravated by an approaching storm. She had entered in all that threat with a sort of tragic audacity. However, let us insist on it, she had not been without warning.

II.

THE ORIGINAL PROFILES WORKED OUT

As long as the hooker was in the Bay of Portland, there was but little sea on; the waves were nearly still. However dark the ocean, the sky was still clear. The breeze took but little hold of the vessel. The hooker hugged the cliff as closely as possible, as it was a good screen for it.

There were ten of them on the little Biscayan felucca; three men in the crew and seven passengers, two of whom were women. In the light of the open sea, for the sea makes the twilight almost daylight, all the faces were now visible and distinct. Besides, they no longer concealed themselves, they were at ease; each one resumed his ease of manner, spoke naturally, showed his face, the departure being a deliverance.

The medley of the group now showed itself fully. The women were of no particular age; for a wandering life makes premature old age, and indigence is a wrinkle. One was a Basque

of the *Dry-Ports;* the other, the woman with the big rosary, was an Irishwoman. They had the indifferent look of the wretched. On coming aboard they had crouched down beside one another, on some chests at the foot of the mast. They were talking; Irish and Basque are two kindred tongues, as we have already said. The Basque had her hair perfumed with onion and sweet basil. The skipper of the hooker was a Basque from Guipuzcoa; one sailor was a Basque from the northern slope of the Pyrenees, the other a Basque from the southern slope, that is to say, of the same nation, although the first was a Frenchman and the second, a Spaniard. The Basques do not recognize an official country. "*Mi madre se llama montaña*" ("My mother's name is 'the mountain'"), as Zalareus, the muleteer, used to say. Of the five men who accompanied the two women, one was a Frenchman from Languedoc, one a Frenchman from Provence, one was a Genoese, one, an old man, he with the sombrero without a hole for a pipe, seemed a German, the fifth, the chief, was a moorland Basque from Biscarossa. It was he who, at the moment when the child was about to board the hooker, had thrown the gang-plank into the sea, with a kick of his heel. This robust, alert, agile man, covered, as may be remembered, with braid, span-

gles and tinsel, which made his rags blaze, could not keep quiet; he leaned over, straightened himself up again, came and went continually from one end of the ship to the other, as if uneasy between what he had just done and what was going to happen.

This chief of the troop and the skipper of the hooker, and the two men of the crew, Basques, all four, spoke now Basque, now Spanish, now French, these three languages being in general use on the two slopes of the Pyrenees. Moreover, except the women, they all spoke a kind of French, which formed the basis of the band's slang. The French language, from that epoch, began to be chosen by nations as intermediary between the excess of consonants of the North and the excess of vowels of the South. In Europe business men spoke French: so did thieves. It will be remembered that Gibby, the London thief, understood Cartouche.

The hooker, a fine sailor, was going at a good rate; nevertheless, ten persons, with their luggage, were a heavy load for so frail a frame.

This rescue of a band by this vessel, did not necessarily imply the affiliation of the crew with the band. It was enough that the skipper was a *Vascongado*, and that the chief of the band was another. Among that race,

mutual help is a duty which admits of no exception. A Basque, as we have just said, is neither a Spaniard nor a Frenchman, he is a Basque, and always and everywhere he must save a Basque. Such is Pyrenean fraternity.

All the time that the hooker was in the bay, the sky, although it had a bad look, did not appear sufficiently angry to preoccupy the fugitives. They were running away, they were escaping, they were brutally gay. One laughed, the other sang. The laugh was harsh, but free; the song was low, but careless.

The Languedocian shouted: "*Caoucagno!*" "*Cocagne!*" is the height of satisfaction in Narbonne. He was a half-sailor, a native of the aquatic village of Gruissan, on the southern slope of the Clappe, a waterman more than a sailor, but accustomed to handle the scows on the pond of Bages, and to draw his dragnet full of fish upon the salty sands of Sainte-Lucie. He belonged to the race which wears the red cap, crosses itself in the complicated Spanish fashion, drinks wine out of a goatskin, sucks the leathern bottle, scrapes ham, kneels down to blaspheme, and implores its patron saint with threats: "Great saint, grant me what I ask of thee, or I'll throw a stone at thy head," "*ou té feg' un pic.*"

He could, at need, join the crew to advan-

tage. In the galley, the Provençal was stirring up a turf fire under an iron pot and making soup.

This soup was a sort of *puchero*, where fish took the place of meat, and in which the Provençal threw chick peas, little pieces of bacon cut in squares and pods of red pepper, concessions of the *bouillabaisse* eater to the eater of *olla podrida*. One of the sacks of ship's-stores was unpacked, beside him. He had lighted an iron lantern, with isinglass panes, which swung above his head from a hook, in the ceiling of the store-room. Next to it, on another hook, swayed the halcyon weather-cock. It was then a popular belief, that a dead halcyon, suspended by the beak, always presented its breast to the side from which the wind came.

While busy making the soup, the Provençal now and then put the neck of a gourd to his mouth and took a swallow of *aquardiente* or brandy. It was one of those wide, flat, wicker-covered gourds, with handles, which were hung at the side by a strap, and were then called "hip-gourds." Between each gulp, he mumbled a couplet of one of those rustic songs, whose subject consists of nothing at all; a hollow road, a hedge; you see in the meadow, through a gap in the bushes, the lengthened shadow of a cart and a horse in

the setting sun, and from time to time there appears and disappears above the hedge, the tip of a pitch-fork loaded with hay. It does not take more than that for a song.

A departure is a relief or an oppression, according to what one has in one's heart or mind. All seemed relieved, except one, the old man of the troop, the man with the hat without a pipe.

This old man, who seemed to be German rather than anything else, although he had one of those unfathomable faces, whence all nationality is effaced, was bald, and so grave that his baldness seemed a tonsure. Every time he passed before the Holy Virgin at the prow, he raised his felt hat, and you could see the swollen and senile veins of his head. A sort of long robe of brown Dorchester serge, worn and torn, in which he wrapped himself, only half hid his close, tight-fitting under-coat, which was hooked up to the collar, like a cassock. His two hands had a tendency to cross themselves, and the mechanical way of joining of habitual prayer. He had what could be called a wan physiognomy; for physiognomy is above all things a reflection, and it is a mistake to think that an idea has no color. This physiognomy was evidently the surface of a strange internal condition, the result of a medley of incon-

sistencies, some of which went to mingle with good, others with evil, and, to an observer, the revelation of something almost human, which could sink below the tiger or rise above man. This chaos of the soul can exist. There was something illegible on this face. Secrecy here went to the verge of abstraction. One understood that this man had had that foretaste of evil, which is calculation, and that after-taste, which is zero. In his impassibility, which was, perhaps, merely apparent, the two petrifactions were impressed; the petrifaction of the heart, peculiar to the executioner, and the petrifaction of the mind, peculiar to the mandarin. One might have said, for the monstrous has its way of being complete, that everything was possible for him, even to be moved. Every learned man is somewhat of a corpse. This was a learned man. Merely to see him made one guess that learning, which was impressed upon his gestures and in the folds of his gown. His was a fossil face, whose seriousness was counteracted by the wrinkled mobility of the polyglot which verges on grimace. It was severe, however. Nothing hypocritical, but nothing cynical, either. A tragic dreamer. He was the man whom crime has left pensive. He had the eyebrow of a bandit, modified by the glance of an archbishop. His sparse gray hair

was white on the temples. You felt that he was a Christian, complicated by Turkish fatalism. Gouty deposits deformed his fingers, which were dissected by his leanness; his tall, stiff, figure was ridiculous; he had good sea-legs. He paced the deck slowly without looking at any one, with a decided and ominous look. His eyes were vaguely full of the fixed light of a soul mindful of the tenebrous and subject to reapparitions of conscience.

From time to time the chief of the band, abrupt and alert, and making rapid zig-zags on the vessel, came and whispered to him. The old man answered by a movement of the head. It was like lightning consulting night.

III.

UNEASY MEN ON THE UNEASY SEA

Two men on the vessel were absorbed, this old man and the skipper of the hooker, who must not be confounded with the chief of the band; the skipper was engrossed with the sea, the old man with the sky. One did not take his eyes from the waves, the other kept a watch on the clouds. The behavior of the water was the skipper's care; the old man seemed to suspect the zenith. He watched the stars through every opening in the clouds.

It was the time when it is still day, and when a few stars begin to pierce the evening-light.

The horizon was singular. The mist upon it was of many kinds.

There was more fog on land, and the clouds were heavier over the sea.

Even before going out of Portland Bay, the skipper, anxious about the tide, at once had the ship most carefully manœuvred. He did not wait until he had cleared the cape.

He examined the rigging, made sure that the stays of the lower shrouds were in good condition, and strengthened the futtock shrouds; the precautions a man takes who expects to make speed at all risks.

The hooker drew half a vara [a foot and a half] more at the bow than at the stern, that was her defect.

The skipper moved every moment from the sailing, to the standard compass, looking at the objects on the coast through the two sight-holes, so as to reconnoitre the point of the wind to which they answered. First a bowline breeze sprang up; he did not seem annoyed at it, although it was five points out of his course. He held the tiller himself as much as possible, seeming to trust no one but himself, so as not to lose any force, the effect of the rudder being kept up by the swiftness of the headway.

The difference between the true and the apparent rhumb being all the greater in proportion to the swiftness of the vessel, the hooker seemed to gain in the direction of the origin of the wind more than she really did. The hooker had not a flowing wind, and was not sailing very close, but one cannot know the true course positively, except when one sails before the wind. If one perceives long bands in the clouds which tend to the same

point, the wind is from that quarter; but that evening there were variable winds, and the point of the rhumb fluctuated, hence the skipper mistrusted the illusive movements of the vessel.

He steered at once both cautiously and boldly, hauled in the weather-braces, watched for sudden swervings, kept her from yawing, did not allow her to veer, observed the drift, noted the little jerks of the rudder, had an eye to all the little details of movement, to the inequalities of rapidity in the headway, to sudden gusts; held her in constantly, for fear of accident, some points clear of the coast which he was skirting, and, above all, he kept the angle of the vane with the keel further open than the angle of the sails; the rhumb of the wind indicated by the needle, always being doubtful, owing to the small size of the compass. His eye, constantly lowered, examined all the changes made in the water.

Once, however, he raised his eyes towards space, and tried to see the three stars which are in Orion's belt; these stars are called the three Magi, and an old proverb of the ancient Spanish pilots says: "He who sees the three Magi is not far from the Saviour."

This skyward glance of the skipper, coincided with this aside, muttered at the other end of the ship by the old man:

"We do not even see the *Claire des gardes*,

nor the star Antares, red as it is. Not one star is distinct."

There was no anxiety among the other fugitives.

Nevertheless, when the first hilarity of escape had passed, they were obliged to notice that they were at sea in the month of January, and that the north wind was icy. They could not house themselves in the cabin, which was much too narrow, and was, besides, encumbered with baggage and bales. The baggage belonged to the passengers and the bales to the crew, for the hooker was not a pleasure-boat, and was engaged in smuggling. The passengers had to establish themselves on deck, a condition to which these nomads were easily resigned. The habits of open-air life make night arrangements easy for vagabonds; the open sky is one of their friends; and the cold helps them to sleep, sometimes to die.

This night, however, as we have just seen, *la belle étoile* (the open sky) was absent.

The Languedocian and the Genoese, while waiting for supper, huddled themselves up, near the women at the foot of the mast, under some tarpaulins which the sailors threw them.

The bald old man remained standing at the prow, motionless, and as if insensible to the cold.

The skipper of the hooker from his place at the helm made a sort of guttural call, something like the interjection of the bird which is called the Exclaimer, in America; at this cry, the chief of the band drew near and the skipper addressed him with this apostrophe: "*Etcheco jaüna!*" These two Basque words, which signify "tiller of the mountain," are, among these ancient Cantabrians, a solemn preface to any subject, and command attention.

Then the skipper pointed out the old man to the chief, and the dialogue continued in Spanish, not very correct Spanish, however, being mountaineer dialect. Here are the questions and the answers.

"Etcheco jaüna, que es este hombre?"
"Tiller of the mountain, who is that man?"
"Un hombre."
"A man."
"Que lenguas habla?"
"What language does he speak?"
"Todas."
"All."
"Que cosas sabe?"
"What things does he know?"
"Todas."
"All."
"Qual païs?"
"Which is his country?"

"Ningun, y todos."
"None, and all."
"Qual Dios?"
"Who is his God?"
"Dios."
"God."
"Como le llamas?"
"What do you call him?"
"El Tonto."
"The madman."
"Como dices que le llamas?"
"What do you say you call him?"
"El Sabio."
"The Sage."
"En vuestra tropa, que esta?"
"What is he in your troop?"
"Esta lo que esta."
"He is what he is."
"El gefe?"
"The chief?"
"No."
"No."
"Pues, que esta?"
"Then, what is he?"
"La alma."
"The soul."

The chief and the skipper separated, each returning to his thoughts, and, a little later, the *Matutina* left the gulf.

The great swells of the open sea began.

The sea, in the spaces free from foam, had a slimy look; seen in the twilight gleam the averted profiles of the waves looked like pools of gall. Here and there a wave, floating flat, presented cracks and stars, like a pane of glass at which stones have been thrown. At the centre of these stars, in a whirling hole, there trembled a phosphorescence much like that feline reflection of vanished light, which is in the eyes of screech-owls.

The *Matutina* crossed the dangerous seething of Chambers Bank proudly and like a valiant swimmer. Chambers Bank, a hidden obstacle at the outlet of Portland roads, is not a bar, but an amphitheatre. A circus of sand under water, benches sculptured by the circles of the waves, a round and symmetrical arena, lofty as a Jungfrau, but drowned; an Ocean Coliseum, dimly seen by the diver in the visionary transparence of engulfment—such is Chambers Bank. There hydras contend with one another, and there leviathans meet; there are, so say the legends, at the bottom of the gigantic funnel, the carcasses of vessels seized and sunk by the immense spider, Kraken, which is also called the mountain-fish. Such is the frightful shadow of the sea.

These spectral realities, unknown to man, manifest themselves on the surface by a slight shiver.

In the nineteenth century, Chambers Bank is in ruins. The breakwater recently constructed, has overturned and mutilated that lofty submarine architecture, by dint of surf, just as the jetty built at Croisic in 1760, changed the time of the tides there by a quarter of an hour. Yet the tide is eternal; but eternity obeys man more than one supposes.

IV.

A CLOUD, DIFFERENT FROM THE OTHERS, COMES UPON THE SCENE

The old man, whom the chief of the troop had first entitled the Madman and then the Sage, no longer left the bow. After passing Chambers Bank, his attention was divided between the sky and the ocean. He lowered his eyes, then raised them; what he scrutinized above all was the north-east.

The skipper intrusted the helm to a sailor, stepped over the hatchway of the chain locker, crossed the gang-way, and came to the forecastle.

He drew near the old man, but not from the front. He kept a little in the rear, with his elbows close to his hips, his hands spread out, his head inclined towards his shoulder, his eyes wide open, his eyebrows raised, smiling at the corner of his lips, which is the attitude of curiosity, when it wavers between irony and respect.

The old man, either because he had the habit of talking to himself at times, or feeling that

someone was behind him, incited him to speak, began to soliloquize, while gazing into space.

"The meridian from which right ascension is reckoned, is marked in this century by four stars; the Polar star, Cassiopeia's chair, the head of Andromeda and the star Algenib, which is in Pegasus. But not one is visible."

These words followed each other automatically, indistinctly, were barely articulated, as though he had nothing to do with their utterance, as it were. They floated out of his mouth and were dispersed. Monologue is the smoke of the internal fires of the soul.

The skipper interrupted:

"My lord ——"

The old man, who was perhaps somewhat deaf, as well as very pensive, continued:

"Not enough stars, and too much wind. The wind always leaves its course to come and strike on the coast. It flings itself vertically. That is because the land is so much warmer than the sea. Its air is lighter. The cold and heavy sea-wind precipitates itself upon the land, to replace it. That is why the wind blows towards the land from all quarters of the open sky. It would be advisable to make long tacks between the estimated and the presumed parallel. When the latitude by observation does not differ from the presumed latitude by more than three minutes in ten leagues,

or of four in twenty, you are on the right course."

The skipper bowed, but the old man did not see him. This man, who wore a gown almost such as is worn by the university men of Oxford or of Goettingen, did not stir from his haughty and forbidding posture. He watched the sea like a connoisseur of tides and men. He studied the waves, but almost as if he were going to ask, amid their tumult, for his turn to speak, and teach them something. There was in him something of the schoolmaster and of the augur. He had the look of the pedant of the abyss.

He continued his soliloquy, made, perhaps, to be listened to, after all.

"One could struggle, if there were a wheel instead of a tiller. With a speed of four leagues an hour, thirty pounds of pressure on the wheel can produce three hundred thousand pounds on the course. And more yet, for there are cases when one can give the chain two turns more."

The skipper bowed a second time and said:

"My lord ——"

The old man's eye fixed itself on him. His head turned without his body moving.

"Call me doctor."

"My lord doctor, I am the skipper."

"Good," replied the "doctor."

The doctor—we shall call him so henceforward—appeared to consent to take part in the dialogue:

"Skipper, hast thou an English octant?"

"No."

"Without an English octant, thou canst take altitude, neither fore nor aft."

"The Basques," replied the skipper, "took altitude before there were any English."

"Beware of luffing."

"I ease off, when necessary."

"Hast measured the speed of the vessel?"

"Yes."

"When?"

"Just now."

"By what means?"

"By means of the log."

"Hast had a care to keep an eye on the wood of the log?"

"Yes."

"Does the hour-glass tell its thirty seconds correctly?"

"Yes."

"Art sure that the sand has not worn away the hole between the two globes?"

"Yes."

"Hast made the test of the hour-glass by the vibration of a musket-ball suspended—"

"By a flat thread drawn over soaked hemp? Of course."

"Didst wax the thread for fear of its stretching?"

"Yes."

"Hast tested the log?"

"I have tested the hour-glass by the musket-ball and the log by the cannon-ball."

"What is the diameter of thy cannon-ball?"

"One foot."

"A good weight."

"It is an old ball of our old war hooker, 'La Casse de Par-Grand.'"

"Which was in the Armada?"

"Yes."

"And carried six hundred soldiers, fifty sailors, and twenty-five guns?"

"The shipwreck knows that."

"How didst compute the resistance of the water against the ball?"

"By means of a German scale."

"Didst take into account the impulse of the tide against the rope holding the ball?"

"Yes."

"What is the result?"

"The resistance of the water was one hundred and seventy pounds."

"That is to say, the ship is making four French leagues an hour."

"Or three Dutch leagues."

"But that is only the difference between the speed of the vessel and that of the sea."

"Of course."

"Whither art steering?"

"To a cove that I know between Loyola and Saint-Sebastian."

"Place thyself upon the parallel of destination quickly."

"Yes. With the least possible deviation."

"Beware of winds and currents. The former excite the latter."

[Traidores.] "Traitors."

"No offensive word. The sea hears. Insult nothing. Be content to observe."

"I have observed and I observe. The tide is now against the wind; but, in a little while, when it runs with the wind, we shall be all right."

"Hast a chart?"

"No. Not for this sea."

"Then art sailing by groping thy way?"

"Not at all. I have the compass."

"The compass is one eye, the chart is the other."

"A one-eyed man can see."

"How dost measure the angle which the vessel's course makes with the keel?"

"I have my variation compass and then I guess."

"Guessing is well; knowing is better."

"Christopher [Columbus] guessed."

"When it is overcast, and the needle shifts

nastily, one no longer knows by which side of the harness to take the wind, and one ends by having neither an estimated nor a rectified point. An ass with his chart is worth more than a wizard with his oracle."

"There is no confusion in the wind yet, and I see no cause for alarm."

"Ships are flies in the spider's web of the sea."

"At present, everything is in pretty good condition, both in wind and water."

"A quivering of black specks on a wave,—such are men on the ocean."

"I look for nothing bad to-night."

"Something so impenetrably black may come, that thou wilt find it hard to get out of the scrape."

"So far, all goes well."

The doctor's eye fixed itself on the north-east.

The skipper continued:

"Let us but reach the Gulf of Gascony, and I'll answer for all. Ah! yes, indeed, I am quite at home there. I've got it by heart, my Gulf of Gascony. It's often a raging little wash-basin, but there I know all the soundings and the very nature of the bottom: mud in front of San Cipriano, shells in front of Cizarque, sand at Cape Penas, little pebbles at Boucaut de Mimizan, and I know the color of all the pebbles."

The skipper stopped; the doctor was no longer listening.

The doctor was staring at the north-east. Something extraordinary was taking place on that icy visage.

All the amount of terror which a stone mask is capable of expressing, was depicted there. His lips dropped the words:

"It is well!"

His eyes, which had become quite round and owl-like, had dilated with stupor while examining a point in space.

He added:

"It is right. As for me, I am willing."

The skipper looked at him.

The doctor resumed, speaking to himself, or to some one in the abyss:

"I say yes."

He was silent, opened his eyes wider and wider with increased attention to what he saw, and resumed:

"It comes from afar, but it knows what it does."

The segment of space into which the doctor's visual ray and thought were plunging, being opposite the west, was lighted by the vast twilight reflection, almost as if by daylight. This segment, very circumscribed in extent and surrounded by strips of grayish vapor, was simply blue, but of a

blue bordering more on lead color than on azure.

The doctor, turned fully towards the sea, and henceforward, not looking at the skipper, pointed his finger at this aërial segment and said:

"Skipper, dost see?"

"What?"

"That."

"What?"

"Yonder."

"Something blue? Yes."

"What is it?"

"A bit of heaven."

"For those who are going to heaven," said the doctor. "For those who are going elsewhere, it's something else."

And he emphasized these enigmatical words with a frightful look, which was lost in the gloom.

There was a silence.

The skipper, thinking of the double title given this man by the chief, asked himself this question: "Is he a madman? Is he a sage?"

The doctor's bony and rigid forefinger had remained immovable, pointing towards the dim blue corner of the horizon.

The skipper inspected this blue spot.

"Indeed," muttered he, "it is not sky, it is cloud."

"A blue cloud worse than a black cloud," said the doctor; and he added:

"It is the snow-cloud."

"*La nube de la nieve*," said the skipper, as if he sought to understand it the better by translating the phrase for himself.

"Know'st thou what the snow-cloud is?" asked the doctor.

"No."

"Wilt know it shortly, then."

The skipper began to examine the horizon again.

While he observed the cloud, the skipper muttered between his teeth:

"A month of squalls, a month of rain, January coughing and February crying, that's all the winter we Asturians have. Our rain is warm. We have snow only in the mountains. But, look out for the avalanche! The avalanche knows nothing, the avalanche is a brute."

"And the water-spout is a monster," said the doctor.

The doctor, after a pause, added:

"Here it comes."

He resumed:

"Several winds are setting to work at the same time. A heavy wind from the west and a very slow wind from the east."

"That one is a hypocrite," said the skipper.

The blue cloud was growing.

"If snow," continued the doctor, "is formidable when it rolls from the mountain, judge what it must be when it is hurled from the Pole."

His eye was glassy. The cloud seemed to grow on his face as well as on the horizon.

He resumed with a dreamy accent:

"Every minute brings on the hour. The will from above is about to be revealed."

Again the skipper put to himself the inward interrogation: "Is he a madman?"

"Skipper," began the doctor once more, his eye always riveted on the cloud, "hast navigated the Channel much?'

The skipper replied:

"To-day is the first time."

The doctor who was absorbed by the blue cloud, and who, like the sponge, which has but a certain capacity for water, had but a certain capacity for anxiety, was not moved beyond a very slight shrug of the shoulders by this reply of the skipper.

"How is that?"

"My lord doctor, I usually make only the journey to Ireland. I go from Fontarabia to Black Harbor or to Akill Island, which is a double island. Sometimes I go to Brachipult (Braich-y-Pwll), which is a point in Wales. But I always steer outside the Scilly Isles. I do not know this sea."

"That's serious. Woe to him who spells out the ocean! The Channel is a sea which must be read fluently. The Channel is the Sphinx. Beware of the bottom."

"We are in twenty-five fathoms here."

"We must get to the fifty-five fathoms which are on the west, and avoid the twenty which are on the east."

"We will take soundings on the way."

"The Channel is not like any other sea. The tide here rises fifty feet in spring-tides and twenty-five in neap-tides. Here the reflux is not the ebb, and the ebb is not the outflow. Ah! thou hadst indeed a disconcerted look."

"We will take soundings to-night."

"To sound, one must heave to, and that thou canst not."

"Why?"

"On account of the wind."

"We will try."

"The squall is a close chaser."

"We will take soundings, my lord doctor."

"Thou'lt not be even able to bring her head to the wind."

"Trust in God."

"Be prudent in words. Do not lightly pronounce the awful name."

"I will sound, I tell you."

"Be modest. Thou'lt be cuffed by the wind directly."

"I mean to say that I shall try to sound."

"The resistance of the water will prevent the lead from sinking and the line will break. Ah! thou art in these parts for the first time!"

"For the first time."

"Well, in that case, skipper, listen."

The accent of that word, *listen*, was so imperative that the skipper bowed.

"I listen, my lord doctor."

"Haul in to larboard, and tack to starboard."

"What do you mean?"

"Steer thy course to the west."

"Caramba!"

"Steer thy course to the west."

"Impossible."

"As thou wilt. What I say, is for the others. As for me, I accept."

"But, my lord doctor, to steer west—"

"Yes, skipper."

"It's having the wind dead ahead!"

"Yes, skipper."

"And having a devilish pitching!"

"Choose other words. Yes, skipper."

"It's putting her on the rack."

"Yes, skipper."

"Perhaps the mast would go."

"Perhaps."

"You wish me to steer west?"

"Yes."

"I cannot."

"In that case, settle thy quarrel with the sea as thou wilt."

"The wind ought to change."

"It will not change all night."

"Why?"

"This is a blast twelve hundred leagues long."

"Make headway against such a wind! Impossible."

"Steer to the west, I tell thee!"

"I'll try. But, in spite of everything, she'll sheer off."

"That's the danger."

"The wind drives us to the east."

"Go not to the east."

"Why?"

"Skipper, know'st what Death's name is for us, to-day?"

"No."

"Death's name is the East."

"I'll steer west."

This time the doctor looked at the skipper, and looked at him with the glance that bears down as if to press a thought into the brain. He had turned quite around towards the skipper and pronounced these words slowly, syllable by syllable:

"If to-night, when we are out at sea, we hear the sound of a bell, the ship is lost."

The skipper gazed at him, stupefied.

"What do you mean?"

The doctor did not answer. His glance, which had gone outward for an instant, had now gone back. His eye was again fixed on inward things. He did not appear to notice the skipper's wondering question. He was no longer attentive to anything but what he was listening to, within himself. His lips articulated, as if mechanically, these words as low as a murmur:

"The time has come for black souls to wash themselves."

The skipper made that expressive pout which brings all the lower part of the face close to the nose.

"He is the madman rather than the sage," he muttered.

And he moved off.

Nevertheless he steered west.

But the wind and the sea were rising.

V.

HARDQUANONNE

All sorts of swellings disfigured the mist, and bulged out at the same time on every point of the horizon, as if unseen mouths were busy blowing up the leathern bags of the tempest. The shape of the clouds was becoming ominous.

The blue cloud filled all the background of the sky. There was now as much of it in the west as in the east. It advanced against the wind. These inconsistencies belong to the wind's nature.

The sea, which a moment before had scales, now had a skin. Such is the nature of that dragon. It was no longer a crocodile, it was a boa. This skin, lead-colored and dirty, seemed thick and heavily wrinkled. On the surface, isolated bubbles of swell, like pustules, grew round and then burst. The foam was like a leprosy.

It was at this moment that the hooker, still perceived from afar by the abandoned child, lighted her beacon.

A quarter of an hour elapsed.

The skipper cast his eyes about for the doctor; he was no longer on deck.

As soon as the skipper had left him, the doctor had bent his somewhat inconvenient stature under the companion-way and entered the cabin. There, he had sat down near the cook's galley on a block; he had drawn from his pocket a shagreen ink-case and a Cordovan leather pocket-book; he had extracted from the pocket-book an old, stained and yellow parchment folded in four; he had unfolded this sheet, taken a pen out of his ink-case, laid the pocket-book flat on his knee and the parchment on the pocket-book, and by the rays of the lantern which lighted the cook, he began to write on the back of this parchment. The shock of the waves incommoded him. The doctor wrote for a long time.

As he wrote, the doctor remarked the gourd of brandy that the Provençal tasted every time he added a pepper-pod to the *puchero*, as if he were consulting it as to the seasoning.

The doctor noticed this gourd, not because it was a bottle of brandy, but on account of a name which was plaited in the wicker-work, with red reeds on a white background. It was light enough in the cabin for him to read this name.

The doctor, pausing, spelled it in a low tone.

"Hardquanonne."

Then he addressed the cook.

"I had not noticed that gourd before. Did it belong to Hardquanonne?"

"To our poor comrade, Hardquanonne?" said the cook. "Yes."

The doctor continued:

"To Hardquanonne, the Fleming of Flanders?"

"Yes."

"Who is in prison?"

"Yes."

"In Chatham dungeon?"

"It is his gourd," replied the cook, "and he was my friend. I keep it in remembrance of him. When shall we see him again? Yes, it is his hip-gourd."

The doctor again took up his pen, and began to trace rather tortuous lines upon the parchment, laboriously. He was evidently anxious that it should be very legible. Notwithstanding the trembling of the vessel and the trembling of age, he managed to finish what he wanted to write.

It was time, for suddenly a sea struck the vessel.

An impetuous rush of waters assailed the hooker, and they felt the beginning of that frightful dance with which vessels greet the tempest.

The doctor rose, approached the stove, counteracting the shocks of the swell by dexterous knee movements, dried the lines he had just written, as well as he could by the fire, under the pot, folded the parchment in the pocket-book again, and replaced the pocket-book and the ink-case in his pocket.

The cook's galley was not the least ingenious piece of the interior furniture of the hooker; it was well isolated. Still, the pot swayed. The Provençal was watching it.

"Fish-soup," said he.

"For the fishes," replied the doctor.

Then he returned to the deck.

VI.

THEY THINK THEMSELVES AIDED

In the midst of his growing preoccupation, the doctor passed the situation under review, and any one who had been near him, might have heard the following fall from his lips:

"Too much rolling and not enough pitching."

And the doctor, recalled by the dark workings of his mind, again sank into thought as a miner into his shaft.

This meditation did not at all exclude his close watching of the sea. The closely watched sea is in itself a reverie.

The dark torture of the eternally agitated waters was about to begin. A lamentation rose from all the wide expanse of waters. Confusedly lugubrious preparations were being made in immensity. The doctor observed what was before his eyes, and lost no detail. There was, however, nothing of contemplation in his look. One does not contemplate hell.

A vast commotion, still half-latent, but

already transparent through the turmoils in space, accentuated and aggravated the wind, the vapors and the surge, more and more. Nothing is so logical and nothing seems so absurd as the ocean. This self-dispersion is inherent to its sovereignty, and is one of the elements of its amplitude. The sea is ever for or against. It coils itself only to uncoil. One of its slopes attacks, another delivers. There is no sight like the billows. How shall we paint those hardly real alternating hollows and reliefs, those valleys, those hammocks, those melting breasts, those sketches? How express those thickets of foam, blendings of mountain and dream? The indescribable is there, everywhere; in the rending, in the gathering, in the anxiety, in the perpetual contradiction, in the transparent shadow, in the pendentives of the cloud, in the keystones of ever-broken arches, in the disintegration without gaps and without rupture, and in the funereal din made by all this frenzy.

The wind had just set due north. It was so favorable in its violence, and so useful for getting away from England, that the skipper of the *Matutina* decided to crowd her with canvas. The hooker broke away through the foam, as at a gallop, all sail set, the wind astern, bounding from wave to wave, with fury and glee. The delighted fugitives laughed. They

clapped their hands, applauding the surge, the sea, the puffs of wind, the sails, the speed, the flight, the unknown future. The doctor seemed not to see them, and was musing.

Every vestige of day had disappeared.

This was the very minute when the child, intently watching on the distant cliffs, lost sight of the hooker. Up to this moment his eye had remained fixed and as though leaning upon the vessel. What share had that look in fate? At the moment when distance blotted out the hooker, and when the child no longer saw anything, the child went to the north while the ship went off to the south.

All plunging into night.

VII.

SACRED HORROR

On their part, but with swelling hearts and mirth, those that the hooker was carrying away, saw the hostile land recede and decrease behind them. Little by little the dark circle of the ocean rose higher, lessening Portland, Purbeck, Tineham, Kimmeridge, the two Matravers, the long strips of misty cliff, and the coast dotted with light-houses, in the twilight.

England disappeared. The runaways now had nothing about them but the sea.

All at once the night became terrible.

There was no longer extent nor space; the sky had turned to blackness, and closed in upon the vessel. The slow falling of the snow began. A few flakes appeared. One would have said they were souls. Nothing was visible in the race-course of the wind any more. They felt themselves given up. All possibilities there were snares.

In our climate the polar whirlwind enters on the scene in such cavernous darkness.

A great turbid cloud, like the underpart of a hydra, weighed on the ocean, and, in spots, this livid belly adhered to the waves. Some of these adherences resembled torn pouches, pumping the sea, disgorging vapor, and filling themselves with water. Here and there these suctions drew up cones of foam on the water.

The boreal storm hurled itself on the hooker, the hooker dashed into it. The squall and the ship went to meet, as though to insult, each other.

In this first frantic meeting not a sail was clewed up, not a jib was lowered, not a reef taken in. Such delirium is flight. The mast creaked and bent backward, as if in fear.

Cyclones, in our northern hemisphere, revolve from left to right, in the same direction as the hands of a watch, with a velocity which sometimes reaches sixty miles an hour. Although she was fully at the mercy of this violent whirling impulse, the hooker behaved as if she had been in the manageable semicircle, without any other precaution than keeping her head on to the rollers, and presenting her bows to the wind ahead, while receiving the real wind on her starboard, so as to avoid blows astern and on her broadside. This semi-prudence would not have availed in case of the wind shifting to the opposite quarter.

A deep uproar was blowing in the inaccessible region.

The roar of the abyss,—nothing can be compared to that. It is the immense bestial voice of the world. What we call matter, that unfathomable organism, that amalgamation of immeasurable energies, wherein, occasionally, there can be distinguished an imperceptible amount of intention which makes us shudder, that blind and nocturnal cosmos, that incomprehensible Pan, has a cry, a strange, prolonged, obstinate, continuous cry, which is less than speech and more than thunder. That cry is the hurricane. The other voices, chants, melodies, clamors, words, issue from nests, from broods, from pairings, from nuptials, from homes; this one, the Whirlwind, issues from that Naught which is All. The other voices express the soul of the universe; this one expresses its monster. It is formlessness, howling. It is the inarticulate uttered by the indefinite. Pathetic and terrifying thing. These clamors hold dialogues above and beyond man. They rise, fall, undulate, cause waves of sound, make all sorts of wild surprises for the mind, now burst out, quite close to our ear with the importunity of a blast of trumpets, now have the husky hoarseness of distance; a dizzy uproar which resembles a language, and which, in fact, is a language; it is

the effort which the world makes to speak, it is the stammer of the prodigious. In this wailing, all that the vast shadowy palpitation endures, undergoes, suffers, accepts, and rejects, is confusedly manifested. Most frequently it talks nonsense, it seems a fit of chronic sickness, and it is more a wide-spread fit than an exerted force; we fancy we are witnessing the fall of epilepsy into the infinite. At times, we seem to discern a reclamation by the elements, some inexplicable effort of chaos to reassert its sway over creation. At times, it is a complaint, space bewails and justifies itself; it is something like pleading the cause of the world; we think we can guess that the universe is engaged in a law-suit; we listen, we try to grasp the reasons given, the redoubtable *pros* and *cons;* certain moanings of gloom have the tenacity of a syllogism. Vast disturbance for thought. The cause for the existence of mythologies and polytheisms lies therein. To the terror of these great murmurs are added superhuman profiles, vanished as soon as seen; Eumenides, which are almost distinct; breasts of Furies outlined in the clouds; Plutonian chimeras very nearly defined. No horror equals these sobs, these laughs, these supple turns of din, these undecipherable questions and answers, these calls to unknown auxiliaries. Man knows not where

to turn in the presence of this awful incantation. He bows beneath the enigma of these Draconian intonations. What hidden meaning have they? What do they signify? Whom do they threaten? Whom do they entreat? There is something there like a loosening of fetters. Vociferations from precipice to precipice, from the air to the water, from the wind to the wave, from the rain to the rock, from the zenith to the nadir, from the stars to the foam, the very muzzle of the abyss loosened—such is this tumult, complicated by some unknown mysterious strife with bad consciences.

The loquacity of night is not less lugubrious than its silence. One feels in it the anger of the unknown.

Night is a presence. Presence of whom?

However, a distinction must be made between night and darkness. In night, there is something of the absolute; in darkness, there is the multiple. That logic called grammar, admits of no singular for tenebræ. Night is one, tenebræ are many.

This haze of the nocturnal mystery, is the scattered, the fleeting, the crumbling, the fatal. One no longer feels the earth, one feels the other reality.

In the infinite and indefinite gloom, there is some thing or some one alive; but that

which is alive there, is a part of our death. After our earthly passage, when that shadow shall be light for us, the life which is beyond our life will seize us. In the meantime, it seems as if it were fingering us. Obscurity is a pressure. Night is a sort of seizure upon our soul. At certain hideous and solemn hours, we feel that which is behind the wall of the tomb encroaching upon us.

This proximity of the unknown never seems more palpable than in storms at sea. The horrible augments itself there by the fantastic. The possible interrupter of human actions, the ancient Cloud-Compeller, has there at his disposal, in order to knead the event as may seem good to him, the inconstant element, unlimited incoherence, and diffused and aimless force. That mystery, the tempest, accepts and executes, each instant, some unknown, real, or apparent changes of will.

Poets have, in all ages, called this the caprice of the waves.

But caprice does not exist.

The disconcerting things, which in nature, we call caprice, and, in destiny, chance, are fragments of half-discerned laws.

VIII.

NIX ET NOX

(Snow and Night)

That which characterizes the snow-storm is its blackness. The habitual aspect of nature in a storm, with the earth or sea dark and the sky wan, is reversed; the sky is black, the ocean is white. Foam below, darkness above. A horizon walled in with smoke, a zenith ceiled with crape. The tempest resembles the interior of a cathedral hung with mourning. But not a taper in that cathedral. No Saint-Elmo fires on the crest of the waves; no fire points, no phosphorescence; nothing but one immense gloom. The polar cyclone differs from the tropical cyclone in this, that one kindles all lights, and that the other extinguishes them all. The world suddenly becomes the vaulting of a cellar. From that night there falls a dust of pale spots which hesitate between the sea and the sky. These spots, which are snow-flakes, glide, wander and float. It is as if the tears of a winding-sheet should assume life and begin to move. A mad wind mingles

with this dissemination. A blackness crumbled into whiteness, the furious in the obscure, all the tumult of which the sepulchre is capable, a hurricane under a catafalque,—such is the snow-storm.

Beneath, the ocean trembles, covering awful unknown depths.

In the polar wind, which is electric, the flakes immediately become hailstones, and the air is filled with projectiles. The water, pelted with grape-shot, crackles.

No thunder-claps. The lightning of Boreal storms is silent. What is sometimes said of the cat, "It swears, or spits," can be said of that lightning. It is the threat of a strangely inexorable, half-opened jaw. A snow-storm is a blind and mute tempest. When it has passed, the ships, too, are often blind, and the sailors, mute.

It is not easy to escape from such an abyss.

It would be wrong, however, to believe shipwreck absolutely inevitable. The Danish fishermen of Disco and Balesin, the seekers of the black whale, Hearn sailing towards Behring's Strait to reconnoitre the mouth of the Copper-Mine River, Hudson, Mackenzie, Vancouver, Ross, Dumont d'Urville, all have undergone the most unmerciful snow hurricanes at the very Pole and escaped from them.

It was into this kind of a tempest that the

hooker had entered with all sail set and in triumph. Frenzy against frenzy. When Montgomery, escaping from Rouen, threw his galley at full speed of oars upon the chain barring the Seine at La Bouille, he displayed the same effrontery.

The *Matutina* was sailing fast. She bent so under her sails that, at times, she made a frightful angle of fifteen degrees with the sea, but her good bellied keel adhered to the water as to bird-lime. The keel resisted the clutch of the tempest. The fire-cage lighted up the bow. The cloud full of blasts, dragging its tumor over the ocean, was cramping and gnawing the sea about the hooker more and more. Not a sea-mew. Not a cliff-swallow. Nothing but the snow. The visible expanse of waves was small and frightful. Only three or four huge ones could be seen.

From time to time a vast copper-colored flash of lightning made its appearance behind dark piled masses on the horizon and the zenith. This wide vermilion cleft revealed the horror of the clouds. The abrupt kindling of the depths, from which, for a second, the first tiers of clouds and the distant boundaries of the celestial chaos detached themselves, set the abyss in perspective. Against this fiery background the snow-flakes became black, and they might be said to be black

butterflies fluttering in a furnace. Then all was quenched.

After the first explosion, the squall, still chasing the hooker, began to roar in a continuous bass. This is the growling phase, a portentous lessening of the uproar. There is nothing so alarming as this monologue of the tempest. This gloomy recitative resembles a period of rest taken by the mysterious combating forces, and indicates a sort of stealthy watch in the unknown.

The hooker kept wildly on her course. Her two large sails, especially, were doing fearful work. The sky and the sea were inky, with spurts of foam leaping higher than the mast. Every instant, masses of water swept the deck like a deluge, and at each roll, the hawse holes, now to starboard, now to larboard, became so many open mouths revomiting the spume to the sea. The women had taken refuge in the cabin, but the men remained on deck. The blinding snow whirled. The spitting surge joined it. Everything was furious.

At this moment, the chief of the band, standing abaft on the stern-frame, with one hand grasping the shrouds, with the other tearing off his head-kerchief, which he shook in the glare of the fire-cage, arrogant, content, with haughty face and wild hair, intoxicated by all this gloom, cried :

"We are free!"

"Free! free! free!" repeated the fugitives.

And all the band, clutching the rigging, stood erect on the deck.

"Hurrah!" cried the chief.

And the band howled into the tempest:

"Hurrah!"

At the very moment when this clamor was dying away amid the blasts, a loud and solemn voice arose at the other extremity of the vessel, and said: "Silence!"

Every head was turned around.

They had recognized the doctor's voice. The darkness was thick; the doctor was standing against the mast, with which his leanness was blended, and they did not see him.

The voice resumed:

"Listen!"

All became silent.

Then, through the gloom, they distinctly heard the tolling of a bell.

IX.

A CHARGE CONFIDED TO THE FURIOUS SEA

The skipper of the bark, who was at the helm, burst out laughing.

"A bell! That's good. We are running to larboard. What does that bell prove? That we have land to starboard."

The slow and firm voice of the doctor replied:

"You have no land to starboard."

"Yes, we have!" shouted the skipper.

"No."

"But that bell comes from the land."

"That bell," said the doctor, "comes from the sea."

A shudder passed over these daring men. The haggard faces of the two women appeared in the square of the cabin hatchway like two conjured-up ghosts. The doctor took a step forward, and his long, black form detached itself from the mast. The bell was heard tolling in the depths of night.

The doctor went on:

"In the middle of the sea, halfway between Portland and the Channel Islands, there is a buoy, which is there as a warning. This buoy is moored by chains to the shoal and floats on the surface. An iron trestle is fixed on this buoy, and across this trestle a bell is hung. In heavy weather, the tossed sea shakes the buoy and the bell tolls. That bell you hear."

The doctor allowed an intensified gust to pass by, waited until the sound of the bell gained the upper hand, and continued:

"To hear that bell in a tempest, when a nor'wester is blowing, is to be lost. Why? For this reason. If you hear the sound of that bell, it is because the wind brings it to you. Now the wind comes from the west, and the reefs of Aurigny lie eastward. You can hear the bell only because you are between the buoy and the reefs. It is on those reefs that the wind is driving you. You are on the wrong side of the buoy. If you were on the right side, you would be in the open, on the high sea, on a sure course, and you would not hear the bell. The wind would not carry the sound towards you. You would pass close to the buoy without knowing it was there. We are out of our course. That bell is shipwreck sounding the tocsin. Now, take care!"

The bell, while the doctor was speaking, appeased by a lull in the gale, rang slowly,

stroke after stroke, and this intermittent tolling seemed to testify to the old man's words. One would have said it was the knell of the abyss.

All listened, breathless, now to the voice, now to the bell.

X.

THE STORM IS THE GREAT SAVAGE

Meanwhile the skipper had seized his speaking trumpet.

"*Cargate todo, hombres!*" ("Strike every sail, my lads!")

"Let go the sheets, man the down-hauls, lower away the ties and the brails of the lower sails! Let's take to the west! Let's take more sea-room! Head for the buoy! Head for the bell! There's sea-room beyond. All's not lost."

"Try," said the doctor.

Let us remark here in passing, that this bell-buoy, a sort of marine bell-tower, was removed in 1802. Some very old mariners still remember having heard it. It warned, but rather late.

The skipper's order was obeyed. The Languedocian made a third sailor. All helped. They did better than clew-up, they furled the sails; they lashed all the gaskets, they knotted the reef-points, buntlines, and leechlines; they put preventor-shrouds on the block-straps, which thus might serve as backstays; they

fished the mast; they battened down the port-lids, which is one way of walling-up a ship. These evolutions, though executed while the ship rode a-peak, were, none the less, correct. The hooker was reduced to the bareness of distress. But in proportion as the vessel, in tightening up everything, grew less in size, the commotion of the air and water grew greater around her. The height of the billows attained almost polar dimensions.

The hurricane, like a hurried executioner, began to tear the ship to pieces. In a twinkling, there was a frightful wrenching, the top-sails were blown from the bolt-ropes, the bulwarks carried away, the chess trees thrown out of joint, the shrouds tangled in a heap, the mast broken, all the crash of disaster flying in splinters. The great hawsers parted, though they had four fathoms clinch.

The magnetic tension peculiar to snow storms, helped to break the cordage. It snapped as much under the effluvium as by the wind. Several chains, which had been jerked from their pulleys, ceased to work. The bows, forward, and the quarters, aft, bent under the unendurable pressure. A wave carried off the compass with the binnacle. Another wave carried off the boat, slung like a portmanteau under the bowsprit, according to the quaint Asturian custom. Another wave

carried off the sprit-sail yard. Still another wave carried off the Madonna of the prow, and the fire-cage.

Nothing was left but the helm.

They replaced the missing beacon by means of a large fire grenade full of blazing tow and lighted tar, which they suspended from the stem.

The mast, snapped in two, all bristling with quivering fragments, cordage, tackle, and yards, encumbered the deck. In falling, it had smashed a section of the starboard bulwarks.

The skipper, still at the helm, shouted:

"As long as we can steer, nothing is lost. The lower planking holds good. Axes! Axes! Overboard with the mast! Clear the deck."

Crew and passengers had the fever of supreme struggles. It was the work of a few axe strokes. The mast was pushed overboard. The deck was cleared.

"Now," continued the skipper, "take a halyard and lash me to the helm."

They bound him to the tiller.

While they were tying him, he laughed. He shouted to the sea:

"Bellow! you old thing, bellow! I've seen worse, off Cape Machichaco."

And when he was bound, he clutched the tiller with both hands with that strange joy caused by danger.

"All's well, comrades! Long live Our Lady of Buglose! Let's steer to the west!"

A colossal cross-wave came, and crashed down aft. In tempests there is always a sort of tiger wave, a fierce and final billow, which comes at the appointed time, crawls for a while, as it were, flat on its belly along the sea, then bounds, roars, gnashes, pounces on the vessel in distress, and tears it limb from limb. The whole poop of the *Matutina* was engulfed in foam, and in that conflict of darkness and water a wrench was heard. When the spray cleared off, when the stern reappeared, there was neither skipper nor tiller.

All had been torn away. The tiller and the man that they had just bound to it, had gone away with the waves in the neighing pell-mell of the tempest.

The chief of the band gazed intently into the gloom and exclaimed:

"*Te burlas de nosotros?*" ("Art thou making sport of us?")

This cry of revolt was followed by another cry:

"Let's cast anchor! let's save the skipper."

They ran to the capstan. They dropped the anchor. Hookers had but one. It ended only in their losing it. The bottom was of the hardest rock, the surge frantic. The cable snapped like a hair.

The anchor remained at the bottom of the sea.

Of the cut-water, nothing remained but the angel looking into his spy-glass.

From that moment the hooker was nothing but a wreck. The *Matutina* was irremediably disabled. This vessel, but a while ago winged and almost terrible in its speed, was now impotent. Not a part of her rigging but which was mutilated and out of gear. Stiff and passive, she obeyed the capricious fury of the waters. To see an eagle transformed into a paralyzed cripple in a few moments is a thing which can only happen at sea.

The blasts through space were more and more monstrous. The tempest is a frightful pair of lungs. It unceasingly adds doleful aggravations, to that which has no shadings—black. The bell in the midst of the sea tolled desperately, as if shaken by a fierce hand.

The *Matutina* drifted at the will of the waves; a cork has just such undulations; she no longer sailed, she floated; she seemed ready, each moment, to turn belly up to the surface, like a dead fish. What saved her from this disaster was the good condition of her hull, which was perfectly staunch. Not a plank had given way below the water-line. There was neither fissure, nor crevice, and not a drop of water got into the hold. Fortunately,

for the pump had been damaged, and was useless.

The hooker danced hideously in the anguish of the waves. The deck had the throes of a retching diaphragm. It seemed as though it were making an effort to throw out the shipwrecked men. They, inert, clung to the standing rigging, to the bulwarks, to the transoms, shank-painters, gaskets, to the broken planks, whose nails tore their hands, to the warped riders, to all the wretched remains of disastrous ruin. From time to time they listened. The sound of the bell was growing weaker. It seemed as if it were agonizing. Its clang was nothing more than an intermittent death-rattle. Then this rattle died away. Where were they? And at what distance from the buoy? The sound of the bell had frightened them, its silence terrified them. The nor'wester was perhaps making them take a fatal course. They felt themselves carried away by a frantic revival of the gale. The wreck was running in the blackness. Nothing is more frightful than blind rapidity. They felt the precipice before, below, upon them. It was no longer a race, it was a headlong fall. Suddenly, in the enormous tumult of the snow fog, a ruddy glow appeared.

"A lighthouse!" cried the shipwrecked men.

XI.

THE CASKETS

It was, indeed, the Caskets Lighthouse.

A lighthouse in the nineteenth century is a high conoïd cylinder of masonry, surmounted by a wholly scientific illuminating machine. The Caskets Lighthouse in particular, to-day, is a triple white tower, bearing three light-turrets. These three fire-chambers revolve and pivot on clock-work wheels with such precision, that the man on watch, who notices them from the offing, invariably takes ten steps on the vessel's deck during the irradiation, and twenty-five during the eclipse. All is calculated in the focal plan and in the rotation of the octagonal drum, formed by eight wide simple lenses placed in range, and having above and below it two series of dioptric rings; an algebraic gear, secured against shocks of wind and sea, by thick panes of glass, which, nevertheless, are at times broken by sea-gulls dashing against them; the great moths of these gigantic lanterns.

The building which encloses, sustains, and is the setting of this mechanism, is, like it, mathematical. Everything about it is plain, exact, bare, precise, correct; a lighthouse is a numeral.

In the seventeenth century, a lighthouse was a sort of ornamental land plume set on the seashore. The architecture of a lighthouse tower was magnificent and extravagant. Balconies, balusters, turrets, alcoves, recesses, and little vanes were lavished upon it. There was nothing but masks, statues, foliage, volutes, models in high relief, figures, figurines, and modillions with inscriptions. *Pax in bello*, said the Eddystone Lighthouse. Let us remark, by the way, that this declaration of peace, did not always disarm the ocean. Winstanley copied it on a lighthouse, which he built at his own expense, in a wild spot, in front of Plymouth. When the lighthouse tower was finished, he put himself in it, and let the tempest test it. The tempest came, and carried away both the lighthouse and Winstanley. Moreover, these exaggerated buildings gave a hold to the hurricane on all sides, like those too brilliantly bedizened generals, who, in battle, attract blows. Besides fantastic designs in stone there was fantastic work in iron, copper, and wood; the blacksmith-work was in relief, and the timber-work

made projections. All over, along the profile of the lighthouse, and fastened in the wall among the arabesques, there were engines of all sorts, useful and useless ones, windlasses, tackles, pulleys, counter-weights, ladders, loading-cranes, grapnels for salvage. On the summit around the light, delicately wrought blacksmith's work bore great iron chandeliers, in which lengths of cable steeped in resin were fixed, obstinately burning wicks which no wind could extinguish. And, from top to bottom, the tower was covered with a complication of sea-standards, streamers, banners, flags, pennants, bannerets, which rose from staff to staff, from story to story, amalgamating all colors, all shapes, all heraldic devices, all signals, all confusions up to the light-chamber, and making a joyous riot of rags around this blaze in the tempest. This insolence of light on the brink of the abyss seemed a challenge, and inspired ship-wrecked men with audacity. But the Caskets Lighthouse was not after this fashion.

It was, at this epoch, a plain, old, barbaric lighthouse, just as Henry I. had had it constructed, after the loss of the *Blanche-Nef* [White Ship], a flaming pyre under an iron trellis on top of a rock, live coals behind a grating, and flaming tresses streaming in the wind.

The only improvement that this lighthouse had received since the twelfth century was a

forge-bellows worked by a chain and hook with stone weights, which had been adjusted to the fire-cage in 1610.

At these ancient beacons, the fate of sea-birds was more tragic than at our present lighthouses. The birds flocked there, attracted by the light, dashed themselves upon it, and fell in the brazier where they could be seen leaping, a species of black spirits agonizing within that hell; and at times, they dropped out of the red cage upon the rock, smoking, limping, blind, like half-burned flies out of the flame of a lamp.

To a vessel in good trim, provided with all its resources of rigging, and under the pilot's control, the Caskets Lighthouse is useful. It cries: "Look out!" It gives warning of the reef. To a disabled vessel, it is simply terrible. A paralyzed and inert hull without resistance against the insane tossing of the water, without defence against the pressure of the wind, a fish without fins, a bird without wings, can only go whither the winds drive it. The lighthouse shows her the fatal spot, signals the place for her disappearance, throws a light upon her entombment. It is the taper of the sepulchre.

There is no more tragic irony than to light up the inexorable chasm, to warn against the inevitable.

XII.

HAND TO HAND WITH THE REEF

The poor wretches in distress on board the *Matutina* immediately understood this mysterious derision added to shipwreck. The appearance of the lighthouse just raised their spirits, then overwhelmed them. There was nothing to be done, nothing to be attempted. What has been said of kings may be said of the waves. We are their people; we are their prey. All that they rave we must endure. The nor'wester was driving the hooker on the Caskets. Thither they went. There was no possible refusal. They were rapidly drifting towards the reef. They could feel the bottom rising towards them. The lead, if they could have used a lead to any purpose, would not have shown more than three or four fathoms. The shipwrecked people listened to the dull gulping of the waves in the submarine gaps of the deep rock. They could distinguish below the lighthouse, like a dark cutting between two plates of

granite, the narrow passage to the frightful little savage harbor, which they could guess to be full of men's skeletons and ships' carcasses. It was the mouth of a cavern rather than the entrance to a port. They heard the crackling of the high pile in its iron cage; a haggard crimson illuminated the tempest, the meeting of the flame and the hail disturbed the mist, the black cloud and the red smoke fought, serpent against serpent, live coals torn from the fire flew upon the blast, and the snowflakes seemed to take flight before the sudden assault of the sparks. The reef, blurred at first, now outlined itself distinctly, a mass of rocks, with peaks, crests and vertebræ. The angles were marked by bright scarlet lines, and the inclined planes by blood-red glidings of light. As they advanced, the modeling of the reef grew and rose, ominously.

One of the women, the Irish woman, told off her rosary wildly.

In place of the skipper, who was the pilot, there remained the chief, who was the captain. The Basques all are familiar with the mountain and the sea. They are bold on precipices and inventive in catastrophes.

They were approaching, they were about to strike. They were all at once so near the great north rock of the Caskets, that it sud-

denly eclipsed the lighthouse. They could see nothing but the rock and a glare behind it. This rock, erect in the haze, resembled a tall, black woman with a head-dress of flame.

This ill-famed rock is called the Biblet. On the north it buttresses the reef, which another ridge, the Etacq-aux-Guilmets, supports on the south.

The chief looked at the Biblet, and shouted:

"A man willing to carry a line to the breakers! Is there anyone here who knows how to swim?"

No answer.

Nobody on board knew how to swim, not even the sailors; a not uncommon ignorance among sea-faring people.

A beam, very nearly detached from its fastenings, was swinging in the planking. The chief grasped it in his hands, and said:

"Help me."

They loosened the beam. They had it at their disposal to do with it as they pleased. From being defensive it became offensive.

It was a pretty long beam, of solid oak, sound and strong, capable of serving as an engine of attack and as a point of support; a lever for a burden, a battering-ram against a tower.

"Ready!" cried the chief.

All six of them buttressed against the stump of the mast, held the spar horizontally overboard and straight as a lance against the hip of the reef.

The manœuvre was perilous. To thrust at a mountain is audacity, indeed. The six men might have been thrown into the water by the rebound.

These are the variations in the struggle with tempests. After the squall, the reef; after the wind, the granite. One moment one has to deal with the intangible, the next, with the immovable.

It was one of those minutes during which men's hair turns white.

The reef and the ship were going to foul each other.

A rock is a passive endurer. The reef was waiting.

The surge rolled up madly. It ended the respite. It caught the vessel underneath, lifted it, balanced it for a moment, as the sling balances the projectile.

"Steady!" cried the chief. "It is only a rock, and we are men."

The beam was poised. The six men were one with it. The jagged bolts tore their arm-pits, but they did not feel them.

The wave dashed the hooker against the rock.

The shock took place.

It took place under the shapeless cloud of foam which always hides these catastrophes.

When this cloud fell back into the sea, when the interval between wave and rock was restored, the six men were rolling on the deck; but the *Matutina* was flying along the breaker. The beam had held good, and forced a deviation. In a few seconds, the running of the sea being frantic, the Caskets were behind the hooker. The *Matutina* was, for the moment, out of immediate danger.

Such things happen. It was a straight blow of the bowsprit into the cliff that saved Wood of Largo at the mouth of the Tay. In the wild neighborhood of Cape Winterton, and under the command of Captain Hamilton, it was by a similar manœuvre with the lever against the dangerous Brannodu-um Rock, that the *Royal Mary* was able to escape shipwreck, although she was but a Scotch-built frigate. A wave is a force so suddenly decomposed that it is easy to divert it; possible, at least, even in the most violent concussions. There is something of the brute in the tempest; the hurricane is the bull, and can be put on the wrong track.

The whole secret of avoiding shipwreck is to try and pass from the secant to the tangent.

It is this service that the beam had rendered the vessel. It had done the duty of an oar; it had taken the place of a rudder. But this liberating manœuvre had been done once; it could not be repeated. The beam was in the sea. The severity of the shock had made it leap overboard, out of the men's hands, and it had been lost in the waves. To loosen another plank would have dislocated the framework.

The hurricane carried off the *Matutina* anew. The Caskets immediately appeared a useless encumbrance on the horizon. Nothing looks more out of countenance than a reef of rocks under such circumstances. In nature, on the side of the unknown, there, where the visible mingles with the invisible, there are certain motionless surly profiles, which seem to grow indignant at escaped prey.

So looked the Caskets while the *Matutina* sped away.

The lighthouse, falling back, paled, grew wan, then was obliterated.

This extinction was mournful. The layers of mist sank down upon the glare, which had become indistinct. The radiance was diluted in the moist immensity. The flame floated, struggled, sank, and lost form. One would have called it a drowned thing. The brazier became a glimmering wick, it was only a vague

and pallid trembling. A circle of extravasated light spread all around it. It was like a quenching of light in the depths of night.

The bell, which had been a threat, had grown silent; the lighthouse, which had been a threat, had vanished. However, when these two threats had disappeared, it was all the more terrible. The one was a voice, the other was a torch. They had something human about them. Now they were gone, the abyss remained.

XIII.

FACE TO FACE WITH NIGHT

The hooker found herself drifting with the gloom into immeasurable darkness.

The *Matutina*, after escaping from the Caskets, rose and sank with the swell. A respite, but in chaos. Driven crosswise by the wind, manipulated by the thousand movements of the waves, she reflected all the mad oscillations of the sea. She scarcely pitched any more; a fatal sign of a vessel's distress. Wrecks merely roll. Pitching is the convulsion of the struggle. The rudder alone can hold a vessel's head to the wind.

In tempests, and above all in the meteoric snow-storm, the sea and night end by melting together and amalgamating, and by forming nothing but smoke. Mist, whirlwind, gale, slidings in every direction, no point of support, no guiding marks, no halt, a perpetual recommencement, one gap succeeding another, no visible horizon, the deep, black recoil, the hooker was drifting in all that.

Getting free from the Caskets, eluding the reef, had been a victory for the shipwrecked men. But especially, a stupefaction. They had shouted no hurrahs; at sea, one does not commit such imprudence twice. To cast a provocation where one could not cast a lead is serious.

The repulse of the rock was the accomplishment of the impossible. They were petrified by it. By degrees, however, they began to hope. Such are the insubmergible mirages of the soul. There is no distress, which even at the most critical instant, does not see the inexpressible dawn of hope whitening in its depths. These poor wretches asked for nothing further, than to acknowledge to themselves that they were saved. They had the stammering of it within them.

But a formidable growth suddenly took place in the night. A lofty opaque mass, vertical, right-angled, a square tower of the abyss, which outlined and cut itself out clearly against the background of mist, arose to larboard.

They gazed, open-mouthed.

The gale was driving them towards that.

They knew not what it was. It was the Ortach rock.

XIV.

ORTACH

A new reef appeared.

After the Caskets, Ortach. The tempest is not an artist, it is brutal and all-powerful, and does not vary its means.

Obscurity is inexhaustible. Its snares and perfidies are unending. Man soon reaches the end of his resources. Man expends himself, the abyss does not.

The shipwrecked men turned towards their chief, their hope. He could only shrug his shoulders; the gloomy contempt of impotence.

The Ortach rock is a pavement in the midst of the ocean. The Ortach reef rises, all of a piece, eighty feet straight up above the opposing shock of the surf. Waves and ships break against it. An immovable cube, it plunges its rectilinear flanks perpendicularly into the countless serpentine curves of the sea.

At night, it takes the shape of an enormous headsman's block, resting on the folds of a great black cloth. In the tempest, it awaits

the stroke of the axe, which is a thunder-clap.

But there is never a thunder-clap in the snow-storm. The vessel, it is true, has the bandage over her eyes; all darkness is knotted about her. She is like a prisoner ready for execution. As for the thunderbolt, which makes a prompt ending, it is not to be hoped for.

The *Matutina*, being nothing more than a floating wreck, drifted towards this rock, as she had drifted towards the other. The unfortunate men, who, for a moment, had thought themselves saved, relapsed into agony. The shipwreck, which they had left behind them, reappeared in front of them. The reef again emerged from the bottom of the sea. Nothing had been accomplished.

The Caskets are honey-combed into a thousand compartments, the Ortach is a wall. To be wrecked on the Caskets is to be torn to bits; to be wrecked on the Ortach is to be ground to powder.

Nevertheless, there was one chance.

On these flat surfaces, and the Ortach rock is a flat surface, a wave can ricochet as little as a bullet could. It is reduced to direct action. It is the flow, and then the ebb. It comes on as a billow, and goes back as surge.

In such cases, the question of life and death resolves itself thus: if the wave carries the

vessel to the rock, she breaks on it and is lost; if the surge returns before the vessel has struck, she is carried back, she is saved.

Painful anxiety. The shipwrecked men saw the great, decisive wave coming towards them through the gloom. How far would it drag them? If the wave broke against the vessel, they would be rolled upon the rock, and shattered. If it passed beneath the vessel . . .

The wave passed beneath the vessel.

They breathed.

But what would its return be? What would the surf do with them?

The surf carried them back.

A few minutes later, the *Matutina* was beyond the waters of the reef. The Ortach faded as the Caskets had faded.

This was the second victory. For the second time the hooker had been on the verge of shipwreck and had recoiled in season.

XV.

PORTENTOSUM MARE

Meanwhile, a thickening mist had settled upon these wretched, drifting men. They did not know where they were. They could barely see a few cables' lengths around the hooker. In spite of a perfect lapidation of hailstones, which forced them all to bend their heads, the women were determined not to go down into the cabin again. No one, however desperate his case, but wants to be shipwrecked under the open sky. A ceiling above one, when so near to death, seems to be a foretaste of the coffin.

The sea, swelling more and more, became choppy. The inflation of waves indicates compression; in the fog, certain choppings of the water are signs of a strait. In fact, and without knowing it, they were coasting along Aurigny. Between Ortach and the Caskets on the west, and Aurigny on the east, the sea is bound in and cramped, and the uneasy condition of the sea determines the local

conditions of the storm. The sea suffers like anything else; and where it suffers, it becomes irritated. This channel is dreaded.

The *Matutina* was in this channel.

Imagine a tortoise-shell as large as Hyde Park or the Champs-Elysées, under the water, of which each depression is a shallow, and each relief, a reef. Such is the western approach of Aurigny. The sea covers and conceals this wrecking apparatus. On this armor of submarine breakers the jagged wave leaps and foams. In calm, little ripples; in storm, chaos.

The shipwrecked men noticed this new complication without explaining it to themselves. All at once they understood it. A pale, clear spot appeared in the zenith, a slight pallor spread over the sea; this lividity unmasked to larboard a long shoal running crosswise to the east, towards which, chasing the vessel before her, the wind was rushing. This shoal was Aurigny.

What was that shoal? They trembled. They would have trembled far more if a voice had answered them: "Aurigny."

No island is so defended against the coming of man as Aurigny. Beneath the water and above water it has a ferocious guard, of which Ortach is the sentinel. On the west, Burhou, Sauteriaux, Anfroque, Niangle, Fond-du-Croc, les Jumelles, la Grosse, la Clanque, les Eguil-

lous, le Vrac, la Fosse-Malière; on the east, Sauquet, Hommeau, Floreau, la Brinebetais, la Queslingue, Croquelihou, la Fourche, le Saut, Noire Pute, Coupie, Orbue. What are all these monsters? Hydras? Yes, of the reef species.

One of these reefs is called *le But* [the Goal], as if to indicate that every voyage ends there.

This mass of reefs, simplified by night and water, appeared to the shipwrecked men under the form of a simple dark band, a sort of black erasure on the horizon.

Shipwreck is the ideal of helplessness. To be near land and not to be able to reach it; to float, and not to be able to sail; to have a footing on something that appears solid, and which is fragile; to be full of life and full of death at the same time; to be a prisoner in space; to be walled in between sky and sea; to have the infinite upon one like a dungeon; to have around one the immense flights of gusts and waves, and to be seized, garroted, paralyzed, this crushes, stupefies, and makes one indignant. We fancy that we catch a glimpse of the inaccessible combatant's sneer. That which holds you fast is the very thing which lets loose birds and gives the fish their liberty. It seems nothing, and it is everything. We are dependent on that air which

we can disturb with our lips; we are dependent on that water which we can take into the hollow of our hand. Draw a glassful out of this tempest, and it is but a little bitterness. As a mouthful it is nausea; as surge it is extermination. The grain of sand in the desert, the foam flake in the ocean, are bewildering manifestations; omnipotence does not take the trouble to hide its atom, it makes weakness a force, it fills nothingness with its All, and it is with the infinitely little that the infinitely great crushes you. It is with its drops that the ocean dissolves you; you feel yourself a plaything.

Plaything; what a terrible word!

The *Matutina* was a little above Aurigny, which was favorable; but she was drifting towards the northern point, which was fatal. The north-west wind was launching the vessel towards the northern cape, as a bent bow lets fly an arrow. At this point, a little beyond the harbor of the Corbelets, there is what the seamen of the Norman archipelago called "a singe."

The *swinge* or race is a current of a furious sort. A wreath of funnels in the shallows produces a wreath of whirlpools in the waves. When one lets you go, the other seizes you. A vessel, snapped up by the swinge, thus twists from spiral to spiral, until a pointed

rock pierces her hull. Then the shattered vessel stops, her stern rises from the waves, the bow plunges, the abyss completes its turn of the wheel, the stern sinks and all closes up. A pool of foam spreads and floats, and nothing more is seen on the surface of the wave, except a few bubbles here and there, caused by the smothered breathings under water.

The three most dangerous swinges of the whole channel are the swinge which adjoins the famous sand-bank, Girdler Sands, the swinge at Jersey between le Pignonnet and Noirmont Point, and the swinge at Aurigny.

If a local pilot had been on board of the *Matutina*, he would have warned the shipwrecked men of this new peril. Lacking a pilot, they had instinct; in desperate situations there is a second sight. High spirals of foam were flying along the coast, in the frenzied raid of the wind. This was the "spitting" of the swinge. Many a bark has been capsized in that ambush. Without knowing what was there, they approached with horror.

How could they double that cape? There was no way.

Just as they had seen the Caskets rise above the waves, then Ortach rise, they now saw the point of Aurigny rear itself before them, all of steep rock. They were like giants fol-

lowing one another. A series of frightful duels.

Scylla and Charybdis are but two; the Caskets, Ortach, and Aurigny are three.

The same phenomenon of the invasion of the horizon by the reef was reproducing itself with the grandiose monotony of the abyss. The battles of ocean, like the combats of Homer, have this sublime tautology.

As they approached, each wave added twenty cubits to the cape, frightfully magnified in the mist. The lessening of the interval seemed more and more irremediable. They were touching the edge of the swinge. The first fold which would seize them, would drag them in. Yet another wave to pass, and all would be over.

Suddenly, the hooker was thrust back as by the blow of a Titan's fist. The surge reared up under the vessel and turned over, throwing the wreck, back in its mane of foam. The *Matutina*, under this impulsion, got clear of Aurigny.

She found herself once more on the open sea.

Whence had this succor come? From the wind.

The breath of the storm had just shifted.

The waves had been playing with them, now it was the wind's turn. They had extricated

themselves from the Caskets; but, in front of Ortach, the surge had brought about the favorable change; in front of Aurigny it was the north wind. There had been a sudden veering from north to south.

The sou'wester had succeeded the nor'-wester.

The current is the wind in the water; the wind is the current in the air; these two forces had just opposed each other, and the wind had had the caprice to snatch away the current's prey.

The abrupt movements of the ocean are obscure. They are the perpetual perhaps. When at their mercy, man can neither hope nor despair. They do, then undo. The ocean amuses itself. All shades of untamed ferocity are in that vast and cunning sea, which Jean Bart called "the great brute." It is the claw's scratch, with intervals of velvety pawing. Sometimes the tempest hurries the shipwreck; sometimes it works it out with minute care; one might almost say that it caresses it. The sea has plenty of time. Those who are at the point of death perceive that.

Sometimes, we must say, these delays in the torture announce deliverance. These cases are rare. However this may be, men who are about to perish are prompt to believe in safety; the least abatement in the threats

of the storm suffices them, they affirm to themselves that they are out of peril; after believing themselves buried they announce their resurrection; they feverishly accept that which they do not yet possess; all that bad luck held is exhausted, that is clear; they declare themselves satisfied; they are saved; they cry quits to God. One must not be in too great haste to give such receipts to the Unknown.

The sou'wester set in with a whirlwind. Shipwrecked men never have any but surly assistants. The *Matutina* was impetuously dragged out to sea by what rigging was left her, like a dead woman by her hair. This was like those deliverances granted by Tiberius at the cost of violation. The wind brutalized those it was saving. It rendered them service with fury. It was help without pity.

The wreck, in this liberating roughness, was completely dislocated.

Hailstones, large, and hard enough for loading a blunderbuss, came down upon the vessel. At every swash of the sea these hailstones rolled on the deck like marbles. The hooker, almost flushed with water, was losing all shape beneath the battering of the waves and the dashing of the foam. Each one in the ship thought only of himself.

Whoever could, clung fast. After each sea,

they were surprised to find that they were all still there. Several of them had their faces torn by splinters of wood.

Fortunately, despair has stout fists. A child's hand in fright has the grip of a giant. Anguish makes a vise of a woman's fingers. A frightened young girl would dig her rosy nails into iron. They clung, held fast, they got hold again. But every wave brought them the terror of being swept off.

Suddenly, they were relieved.

XVI.

SUDDEN GENTLENESS OF THE ENIGMA

The hurricane had just stopped short.

There was no longer either nor'wester or sou'wester in the air. The fierce clarions of space held their peace. The whole of the water-spout passed from the sky without any preliminary diminution, without transition, and as though it had slid perpendicularly into an abyss. They no longer knew where it was. Flakes took the place of hailstones. The snow again began to fall slowly.

No more swell. The sea became smooth.

These sudden cessations are peculiar to snow squalls. The electric effluvium once exhausted, all grows tranquil; even the waves, which, in ordinary storms, often retain a prolonged agitation. Not so here. No prolongation of anger in the water. Like a toiler after fatigue, the sea immediately becomes drowsy, which almost gives the lie to the law of statics, but does not astonish old pilots, for they know that all the unexpected is in the sea.

This phenomenon sometimes takes place, although very rarely, in ordinary storms. Thus, in our own day, at the time of the memorable hurricane of the 27th of July, 1867, at Jersey, the wind, after fourteen hours' fury, suddenly fell to a dead calm.

At the end of a few minutes, the hooker had only sleeping waters around her.

At the same time, for the last phase resembles the first, they could no longer distinguish anything. All that had become visible in the convulsions of the meteoric clouds, became indistinct, the pallid outlines were melted into a vague dilution, and the gloom of the infinite closed about the vessel on all sides. This wall of night, this circular occlusion, this inside of a cylinder, of which the diameter was lessening from minute to minute, enveloped the *Matutina*, and, with the ominous deliberation of a closing field of ice, was growing dangerously smaller. In the zenith, nothing—a lid of mist, a closure. The hooker was, as it were, at the bottom of the well of the abyss.

In that well the sea was a pool of liquid lead. The water no longer stirred. Gloomy immobility. The ocean is never more fierce than when it is a pond.

All was silence, stillness, blindness.

The silence of things is perhaps taciturnity.

The last ripples glided along the bulwarks. The deck was horizontal, with imperceptible slopes. A few broken planks stirred feebly. The grenade shell, which took the place of a beacon, and in which tow steeped in pitch was burning, no longer swung at the bowsprit nor threw flaming drops into the sea. What little breeze remained in the clouds made no more noise. The snow fell thickly, softly, and scarcely slanting. They could not hear the surf of any breaker. It was the peace of gloom.

This repose, after these exasperations and these paroxysms, was an unspeakable comfort for the poor creatures who had been tossed about so long. It seemed to them that they had ceased to be put on the rack. They thought they had caught a glimpse around and above them of a willingness to save them. They regained confidence. All that had been fury was now tranquility. This appeared to them the signing of peace. Their miserable chests dilated. They could let go the end of rope or plank they were holding, rise, straighten themselves up, stand erect, walk, move about. They felt themselves inexpressibly calmed. There are, in the depths of darkness, such touches of paradise, a preparation for something else. It was clear that they were really out of the

gale, out of the foam, out of the blasts, out of the fury,—delivered.

Henceforth, all chances were in their favor. In three or four hours, the day would dawn, they would be perceived by some passing vessel, they would be picked up. The worst was over. They were re-entering life. The important point, was to have been able to keep above water until the ceasing of the storm. They said to themselves: "This time it is over."

Suddenly, they perceived that all was over, indeed.

One of the sailors, the Northern Basque, named Galdeazun, went down into the hold to look for rope, then came up and said:

"The hold is full."

"Of what?" asked the chief.

"Of water," replied the sailor.

The chief shouted:

"What does that mean?"

"That means," replied Galdeazun, "that in half an hour we shall founder."

XVII.

THE LAST RESOURCE

There was a rift in the keel. A leak had been sprung. When? no one could have told. Was it in running towards the Caskets? Was it before Ortach? Was it in the chopping of the shallows west of Aurigny? It was most probable that they had touched some rock of the swinge. They had received some unseen and sudden blow. They had not noticed it in the midst of the convulsive winds which had shaken them. In lockjaw, one does not feel a little sting.

The other sailor, the Southern Basque, whose name was Ave-Maria, went down into the hold next, came back and said:

"The water in the hold is about two varas deep." [Six feet.]

Ave-Maria added:

"We shall go down in less than forty minutes."

Where was this leak? It could not be seen. It was under water. The volume of

water which filled the hold concealed this fissure. The vessel had a hole in her hull somewhere under the water-line, far forward, below the careening line. Impossible to see it. Impossible to plug it. They had a wound, and they could not dress it. However, the water did not come in very fast.

The chief called out:

"We must pump."

Galdeazun replied:

"We have no pump left."

"Then," rejoined the chief, "let us make for land."

"Land? Where is it?"

"I do not know."

"Nor I."

"But it is somewhere."

"Yes."

"Let some one lead us there," continued the chief.

"We have no pilot," said Galdeazun.

"Take thou the tiller, then."

"We have lost the tiller."

"Let us rig one up with the first spar we can lay our hands on. Nails. A hammer, quick—some tools!"

"The carpenter's chest is overboard. We have no more tools."

"Let us steer, all the same, no matter where."

"We have no rudder."

"Where's the boat? Let us jump into it. Let us row!"

"We have no boat."

"Let us row the wreck."

"We have no oars."

"Up sail, then."

"We have no sails, nor mast."

"Let us make a mast of a spar, and a sail of a tarpaulin. Let us get out of this. Let us trust to the wind!"

"There is no more wind."

The wind, indeed, had left them. The storm had gone, and this departure, which they had taken for their salvation, had been for their destruction. Had the sou'wester continued, it would have driven them madly upon some coast, would have beaten the leak in speed, would perhaps have carried them to some good, propitious sand-bank, and would have stranded them before they had time to founder. The rapid dash of the storm might have driven them to land. No wind, no more hope. They were dying for lack of a hurricane.

The final situation was nearing.

The wind, the hail, the squall, the whirlwind, are wild combatants which may be conquered. The tempest can be captured by the defect in its armor. There are resources against that violence which continually lays itself bare, makes false moves, and often strikes

wide of the mark. But nothing can be done against the calm. There is not one projection that can be grasped.

The winds charge like Cossacks—hold your ground, and they disperse. A calm is the executioners' pincers.

The water rose in the hold without haste, but without interruption, irresistibly and heavily, and, in proportion as it rose, the vessel sank. It was very slow.

The shipwrecked men on the *Matutina* felt the most desperate of catastrophes, the passive catastrophe, slowly yawning beneath them. The silent and ominous certainty of the unconsciously working force held them. The air did not move, the sea did not stir. The immovable is the inexorable. Absorption was silently sucking them down. Through the mass of silent waters, without anger, without passion, without volition, without consciousness, without interest, the fatal centre of the globe was attracting them. Horror in repose was amalgamating them with itself. It was no longer the yawning mouth of the sea, the viciously threatening double jaw of the wind and wave, the grin of the water-spout, the foaming hunger of the surge; there was under these poor wretches the indescribable black yawning of the infinite. They felt themselves entering into a

peaceful depth, which was Death. The amount of hull which the vessel had above the water was lessening,—that was all. They could calculate at what minute she would be submerged. It was quite the reverse of submersion by a rising tide. The water was not rising towards them, they were going down towards it. The digging of their grave was done by themselves. Their weight was the grave-digger.

They were being executed, not by the law of man, but by the law of things.

The snow was falling, and as the wreck no longer moved, this white lint laid a cloth upon the deck and covered the vessel with a shroud.

The hold was becoming heavier. No means of getting at the leak. They had not even a bailing scoop, which, at any rate, would have been illusory and useless, as the hooker was decked over. They lighted up; they lit three or four torches, which they fixed in holes as well as they could. Galdeazun brought a few old leather buckets; they undertook to bail out the hold, and stood in line; but the buckets were past use, the leather of some was ripped, the bottoms of others were broken, and the buckets emptied themselves on the way. The difference in quantity between what they took in and what they poured out was ludicrous. A barrel of water came in, a

glass of water went out. It was a miser's way of spending; trying to exhaust a million penny by penny.

The chief said:

"Let us lighten the wreck!"

During the tempest, they had lashed the few chests which were on the deck. They had remained bound to the stump of the mast. The lashings were cast off, and the chests were rolled overboard through one of the breaches in the bulwarks. One of these valises belonged to the Basque woman, who could not repress this sigh:

"Oh, my new cloak lined with scarlet! Oh, my poor stockings of birch-bark lace! Oh, my silver ear-rings to wear at mass in the month of Mary!"

The deck cleared, there remained the cabin. It was greatly encumbered. It contained, as will be remembered, baggage belonging to the passengers and bales belonging to the sailors.

They took the luggage and rid themselves of all this load through the breach in the bulwarks. They dragged out the bales and pushed them into the ocean.

They finished clearing the cabin. The lantern, the block, the barrels, the sacks, the buckets, the larders, the pot with the soup, all went into the water.

They unscrewed the bolts of the iron stove,

long since extinguished, unfastened it, hoisted it on deck, dragged it to the breach, and threw it out of the vessel.

They cast into the water everything that they could tear away from the planking, the riders, shrouds and torn rigging.

From time to time, the chief took a torch, and threw its light on the numbers marking the draught painted on the prow, and looked to see how far they were on their way to shipwreck.

XVIII.

THE SUPREME RESOURCE

The wreck being lightened was sinking a little less, but sank continuously.

There was no more resource nor palliative to the hopelessness of the situation. They had exhausted the last expedient.

"Is there anything more to throw in the sea?" cried the chief.

The doctor, of whom no one was thinking, came out of a corner of the companion-way and said:

"Yes."

"What?" asked the chief.

The doctor replied:

"Our crime."

They shuddered, and all exclaimed:

"Amen."

The doctor, erect and pallid, raised a finger towards heaven, and said:

"On your knees."

They staggered, which is the beginning of kneeling.

The doctor resumed:

"Let us throw our crimes into the sea. They weigh upon us. That is what is sinking the ship. Let us think no more of safety, let us think of salvation. Our last crime above all, the one which we committed, or, to speak more correctly, completed, a little while ago, miserable creatures who listen to me, is overwhelming us. It is an impious insolence to tempt the abyss when one leaves the intention of a murder behind one. What is done against a child is done against God. We were obliged to embark, true, but it was certain perdition. The storm came, warned by the shadow cast by our action. It is right. Regret nothing, however. Yonder, not far from us, we have in that darkness the sands of Vauville, and Cape La Hougue. That is France. There is but one possible shelter, Spain. France is no less dangerous for us than England. Our deliverance from the sea would have ended at the gallows. Hanged or drowned, we have no other choice. God has chosen for us. Let us render thanks to Him. He grants us the tomb, which cleanses. My brethren, the inevitable was there. Remember that it was we who just now did our best to send some one up there, that child; and that at this very moment, now as I speak, perhaps there may be above our heads a soul ac-

cusing us before a judge who is looking down upon us. Let us profit by this last respite. Let us try, if it may still be done, to repair, as far as depends upon us, the evil which we have wrought. If the child survives us, let us come to his aid. If he dies, let us try to make him forgive us. Let us lift off our crime, let us unload our consciences of this weight, let us strive to save our souls from being swallowed up before God, for that is the terrible shipwreck. Bodies go to the fishes, souls to demons. Have pity on yourselves. On your knees. I tell you. Repentance is the bark which does not sink. You have no more compass? You are mistaken. You have prayer."

These wolves became sheep. These transformations are seen in last agonies. It sometimes happens that tigers lick the crucifix. When the dark gate stands ajar, belief is difficult, unbelief is impossible. However imperfect the various sketches of religion essayed by man may be, even when the belief is formless, even when the outline of the dogma does not harmonize with the lineaments of the eternity which he dimly sees, there comes in his last moment a quiver of the soul. Something begins after life. This pressure is upon the last agony.

The agony of death is the falling due of a

bill. In that fatal second a man feels a diffused responsibility upon him. That which has been complicates that which will be. The past returns and enters into the future. What is known becomes an abyss as much as the unknown; and these two precipices, the one where one's faults are and the other where one's anticipations are, mingle their reverberations. It is this confusion of the two gulfs which terrifies the dying man.

They had expended their last hope on the side of life. That is why they turned to the other side. No chance remained to them but in that shadow. They understood it. It was a doleful dazzling, suddenly followed by a relapse of horror. What one understands in the agony of death resembles what one sees in lightning. All—then nothing. You see, and then you see no more. After death the eye will open again, and that which once was a flash will become a sun.

They cried out to the doctor:

"Thou! Thou! Thou art the only one! We will obey thee. What must we do? Speak."

The doctor replied:

"The question is to pass over the unknown precipice, and to reach the other shore of life, which is beyond the tomb. Being the one who knows the most, I am the one

amongst us in the greatest danger. You do well to leave the choice of the bridge to him who carries the heaviest burden."

He added:

"Knowledge weighs on the conscience."

Then he resumed:

"How much time is still left us?"

Galdeazun looked at the water-mark, and answered:

"A little more than a quarter of an hour."

"Good," said the doctor.

The low hood of the companion-way, on which he was resting his elbow, made a sort of table. The doctor took his ink-horn and pen from his pocket, and his pocket-book, whence he drew a parchment, the same on the back of which he had written some twenty close and tortuous lines a few hours before.

"A light," said he.

The snow, falling like the foam of a cataract, had put out the torches one after another. Only one remained. Ave-Maria removed it from its socket, and, holding this torch, came and stood beside the doctor. The doctor put back his pocket-book into his pocket, put down his pen and ink-horn on the hood, unfolded the parchment, and said:

"Listen."

Then in the middle of the sea, on that diminishing hulk, a sort of trembling floor of

the tomb, there began a solemn reading by the doctor, to which all the realm of shadow seemed to listen. All these doomed men bowed their heads around him. The blazing of the torch emphasized their pallor. What the doctor read was written in English. At intervals, when one of those melancholy glances seemed to ask an explanation, the doctor would stop and repeat, either in French, in Spanish, or Basque, or Italian, the passage he had just read. Stifled sobs, and hollow blows upon breasts could be heard. The wreck continued to sink.

The reading ended, the doctor laid the parchment flat upon the hood, seized the pen, and on a clear margin, which he had left below what he had written, he signed:

DOCTOR GERHARDUS GEESTEMUNDE.

Then, turning towards the others, he said:

"Come and sign."

The Basque woman stepped up, took the pen, and signed, ASUNCION.

She handed the pen to the Irish woman, who, not knowing how to write, made a cross.

The doctor, next to this cross, wrote BARBARA FERMOY, *of the Isle of Tyrryf, in the Hebrides.*

Then he handed the pen to the chief of the band.

The chief signed, GAIZDORRA, *Captal* [chief].

Beneath the chief, the Genoese signed, GIANGIRATE.

The Languedocian signed, JACQUES QUATOURZE, called the *Narbonnese*.

The Provençal signed, LUC-PIERRE CAPGAROUPE, *of the Mahon galleys*.

Beneath these signatures the doctor wrote this note:

"Of the three men of the crew, the skipper having been washed overboard by a sea, but two are left, and have signed."

The two sailors put their names below this note. The northern Basque signed, GALDEAZUN, the southern Basque signed, AVE-MARIA, *thief*.

Then the doctor said:

"Capgaroupe."

"Present," said the Provençal.

"Hast thou Hardquanonne's gourd?"

"Yes."

"Give it to me."

Capgaroupe drank the last swallow of brandy, and held out the gourd to the doctor.

The quantity of water in the hold was constantly growing greater. The wreck was sinking deeper and deeper into the sea.

The sloping edges of the deck were covered with a thin gnawing wave which was rising.

All had grouped about the vessel's sheer.

The doctor dried the ink of the signatures by the heat of the torch, folded the parchment in narrower folds than the diameter of the neck of the gourd, and put it in.

He called:

"The stopper."

"I do not know where it is," said Capgaroupe.

"Here is a bit of rope," said Jacques Quatourze.

The doctor stoppered the gourd with the rope, and said:

"Some tar."

Galdeazun went forward, dropped a tow-extinguisher on the fire grenade, which went out, unhooked it from the stem, and brought it, half full of boiling tar, to the doctor.

The doctor plunged the neck of the gourd in the tar and drew it out again. The gourd, which contained the parchment signed by them all, was corked and tarred.

"It is done," said the doctor.

And from all these mouths there fell, vaguely stammered in all languages, the dismal murmur of the catacombs.

"So be it!"

"Mea! culpa!"

"Asi Sea!" ["So be it."]

"Aro Rai!"

"Amen."

One might have fancied hearing the dark, sombre voices of Babel, dispersing in the gloom before the awful refusal of Heaven to listen to them.

The doctor turned his back on his companions in crime and distress, and took a few steps towards the side. On reaching the edge of the wreck, he looked into infinite space and said in deep tones:

"*Bist du bei mir?*" ["Art thou with me?"]

He was probably speaking to some phantom.

The wreck was sinking.

Behind the doctor, all stood in thought. Prayer is an irresistible force. They did not bow, they were bent. There was something involuntary in their contrition. They yielded as a sail droops when the breeze fails, and this haggard group by degrees assumed, by the clasping of their hands and the bowing of their heads, the varying but crushed attitude of a despairing confidence in God. It would be hard to say what venerable reflection, coming from the abyss, was roughly outlined on these villainous faces.

The doctor came back to them.

Whatever his past may have been, this old man was grand in the presence of the catas-

trophe. The vast environing reticence preoccupied without disconcerting him. He was the man who is not taken unawares. Upon him calm horror sat. The majesty of God understood was on his face.

This aged and pensive outlaw unconsciously took the pontifical attitude.

He said:

"Pay attention."

He contemplated the expanse for a moment and added:

"Now, we are going to die."

Then he took the torch from the hand of Ave-Maria and shook it.

A spark detached itself and flew away into the night.

And the doctor threw the torch into the sea.

The torch went out. All light vanished. There was no longer anything but the immense unknown gloom. It was something like the tomb closing.

In this eclipse, the doctor was heard to say:

"Let us pray."

They all knelt down.

It was no longer on the snow, it was in water, that they knelt.

They had but a few minutes more.

The doctor alone remained standing. The

snowflakes, in alighting upon him, starred him with white tears, and made him visible against the background of darkness. He might have been taken for the speaking statue of external darkness.

The doctor made the sign of the cross and raised his voice, while under his feet there began that almost indistinct oscillation, which precedes the moment when a wreck is about to founder. He said:

"Pater-noster qui es in cœlis."

The Provençal repeated in French:

"Our Father who art in Heaven."

The Irish woman resumed in the Gaelic tongue, understood by the Basque woman:

"Ar nathair ata ar neamh."

The doctor continued:

"Sanctificetur nomen tuum."

"Hallowed be Thy name," said the Provençal.

"Naomhthar hainm," said the Irish woman.

"Adveniat regnum tuum," continued the doctor.

"Thy Kingdom come," said the Provençal.

"Tigeadh do rioghachd," said the Irish woman.

The kneeling people were in the water up to their shoulders.

The doctor continued:

"Fiat voluntas tua."

"Thy Will be done," stammered the Provençal.

And the Irish woman and the Basque woman exclaimed:

"Deuntar, do thoil ar an Hhalàmb!"

"Sicut in cœlo, et in terra," said the doctor.

No voice answered him.

He lowered his eyes. All the heads were under water, not one of them had risen. They had let themselves drown on their knees.

The doctor took the gourd, which he had placed on the hood, in his right hand and raised it above his head.

The wreck was going down.

While sinking, the doctor murmured the rest of the prayer. His bust was out of the water for a moment, then his head, then there was nothing but his arm holding the gourd, as if he were showing it to the Infinite.

This arm disappeared. The deep sea had no more ripple than a cask of oil. The snow continued to fall.

Something floated and drifted away on the waves into the darkness. It was the tarred gourd, upheld by its wicker cover.

BOOK THREE

THE CHILD IN THE GLOOM

I.

CHESS HILL

The storm was no less intense on land than at sea.

The same fierce unchaining of the elements had taken place around the abandoned child. The feeble and innocent manage, as best they can, in the expenditure of senseless rage made by blind force; the gloom has no discernment; and things have not the clemency that we imagine.

There was very little wind on land; the cold had something motionless about it. No hailstones. The thickness of the falling snow was frightful.

Hailstones strike, harass, bruise, deafen, crush; snowflakes are worse. The gentle and inexorable flake does its work in silence. If it is touched, it melts. It is pure, just as the hypocrite is candid. It is by whitenesses, slowly heaped, that the flake becomes an avalanche, and the knave a criminal.

The child had continued to advance in the

fog. Fog is a soft obstacle, hence its danger; it yields and persists; fog, like snow, is full of treachery. The child, strange wrestler in the midst of all these risks, had succeeded in reaching the foot of the descent and had entered on Chess Hill. He was, without knowing it, on an isthmus, having the ocean on either side, and unable to go astray in that mist, in that snow, and in that darkness without falling into the deep waters of the gulf on the right, or in the raging waves of the open sea on the left. He was walking in ignorance between two abysses.

The isthmus of Portland was singularly rough and rugged at this period. Nothing of its past configuration remains to-day. Since the idea of re-working Portland stone into Roman cement occurred to men, the whole rock has undergone a re-modeling, which has done away with its primitive aspect. Calcareous lias, schist and trap rock are still to be found there, rising from layers of conglomerate, like teeth from a gum; but the pick-axe has broken up and leveled all those bristling and rugged peaks, where the ospreys once hideously perched. There are no longer any summits where the sea-gulls and the stercorarians who, like the envious, are fond of defiling high places, can appoint their meetings. One might seek, in vain, the tall monolith

called Godolphin, an ancient Gaelic word which signifies "*white-eagle.*" In summer, one can still gather on this soil, which is pierced and perforated like a sponge, rosemary, penny-royal, wild hyssop, sea-fennel, which, when infused, makes a good cordial, and that grass, full of knots, which grows out of the sand, and of which matting is made; but one no longer can pick up ambergris, nor black tin, nor that triple species of slate, one green, the other blue, and the third the color of sage-leaves. The foxes, badgers, otters, and martens have left; on the cliffs of Portland, as well as on the point of Cornwall, there used to be chamois; there are no more now. In certain hollows, plaice and pilchard are still caught, but the scared salmon no longer go up the Wey, between Michaelmas and Christmas, to spawn. Those old unknown birds as large as hawks, who could cut an apple in two, and ate only the pips, are no longer seen there, as they were in the time of Elizabeth. One no longer sees those yellow-billed crows, called the *Cornish chough*, "*pyrrocarax*" in Latin, who were malicious enough to drop lighted vine-twigs on thatched roofs. Nor is the sorcerer bird, the fulmar, an emigrant from the Scottish Archipelago, which could eject an oil through his beak, which the islanders burned in their lamps, any longer to be seen. Neither

does one ever in the evening meet in the washes of the ebb tide, the ancient legendary *neitse*, with its pigs' feet and calf's bleat. The tide no longer strands upon these sands the whiskered seal with its curled ears and pointed grinders, dragging itself upon its clawless paws. In this now unrecognizable Portland of to-day, there never were nightingales, on account of the lack of forests, but the falcons, the swans and the sea-geese have flown away. Portland sheep, nowadays, have fat flesh and fine wool; the few scattered sheep which pastured on that salty grass two centuries ago were small and tough, and had rough fleece, as befitted Celtic flocks, once led by garlic-eating shepherds who lived a hundred years and who at a distance of half a mile could pierce armor with their ell-long arrows. Uncultivated land makes coarse wool. The Chess Hill of to-day in no way resembles the Chess Hill of former days, so greatly has it been overturned by man, and by those furious winds from the Scilly Isles which gnaw the very stones.

To-day, this tongue of land bears a railway, which leads to a pretty checker-board of new houses, Chesilton, and there is a "Portland Station." Railway carriages roll along where seals used to crawl.

Two hundred years ago, the isthmus of

Portland was a shelving ridge of sand with a spinal column of rock.

The child's danger changed its form. What the child had to fear in the descent was rolling to the bottom of the precipice; on the isthmus, it was falling into holes. After having had to deal with the precipice, he had to deal with pitfalls. Everything on the seashore is a snare. The rock is slippery, the sands shifting. The points of support are ambushes. It is as if one were walking on pieces of glass. All may suddenly crack beneath you. A crack through which one disappears. The ocean has its sub-basements, like a well-arranged theatre.

The long granite ridges against which the double slope of an isthmus leans, are not easy of access. It is hard to find what is called in scene-shifter's language, real entrances. Man has no hospitality to expect from the ocean; no more from the rock than from the wave; the bird and the fish alone were foreseen by the sea. Isthmuses are particularly bare and bristling. The surge, which wears away and undermines them on either side, reduces them to their simplest form. Everywhere there are bold reliefs, crests, saws, frightful fragments of torn stone, toothed yawnings, like the multicuspid jaw of a shark, breaknecks of wet moss, and rapid slopes of rocks ending in the spray.

Whoever undertakes to cross an isthmus meets, at every step, misshapen blocks, as large as houses, in the form of shin-bones, shoulder-blades, thigh-bones, the hideous anatomy of the flayed rocks. It is not without reason, that these alternate reliefs and depressions on the seashore are called coasts. The pedestrians must get out of this confusion of débris as well as he can. This work is almost like traveling over the bony framework of an enormous skeleton. And to put a child at this labor of Hercules!

Broad daylight would have been useful, it was night; a guide would have been necessary, he was alone. All the vigor of a man would not have been too much, he had but the feeble strength of a child. In lack of the guide, a path would have helped him. There was no path.

By instinct, he avoided the pointed chain of the rocks, and followed the beach as much as he could. It was there that he met the pitfalls. The pitfalls multiplied before him in three forms, the pitfall of water, the pitfall of snow, and the pitfall of sand. The last is the most dangerous. It is sliding into quicksands.

To know what one is facing is alarming, but to be ignorant of it is terrible. The child was fighting unknown danger. He was groping in something which was, perhaps, the grave.

No hesitation. He rounded the rocks,

avoided rifts, guessed at the snares, submitted to the meanderings of obstacles, but advanced. Not being able to walk straight ahead, he walked firmly.

When necessary, he fell back with energy. He knew how to tear himself from the hideous bird-lime of quicksands in time. He shook off the snow. More than once he walked into water up to his knees. As soon as he came out of the water, his wet rags were immediately frozen by the intense cold of the night. He walked rapidly in his stiffened clothes. He had, however, had the wit to keep his sailor's reefer dry and warm on his chest. He was still very hungry.

The chances of the abyss are not limited in any direction; everything is possible there, even salvation. The issue is invisible, but it may be found. How the child, wrapped in a smothering spiral of snow, lost on that narrow causeway between the two jaws of the abyss, unable to see, contrived to cross that isthmus, is what he himself could not have told. He had slipped, climbed, rolled, searched, walked, persevered, that was all. The secret of all triumphs. At the end of a little less than an hour, he felt that the ground was rising again, he was reaching the other side. He left Chess Hill, he was on solid ground.

The bridge which now connects Sandford

Cas to Smallmouth-Sand did not then exist. It is probable that, in his intelligent groping, he had descended as far as a point opposite Wyke Regis, where there was then a tongue of sand, a natural causeway, crossing East Fleet.

He was saved from the isthmus, but he again found himself face to face with the storm, winter, and night.

Before him, lay once more, the dark boundless stretch of the plains.

He looked down in search of a path.

All at once he stooped.

He had just perceived something in the snow, which seemed to him a track.

It was, in fact, a track, the print of a foot. The whiteness of the snow, cut out the imprint clearly, and made it distinctly visible. He examined it. It was a bare foot, smaller than a man's foot, larger than a child's foot.

Probably a woman's foot.

Beyond this imprint, there was another, then another; the footprints followed each other, a step apart, and struck across the plain to the right. They were still fresh and covered with but little snow. A woman had just passed there.

This woman had walked, and had gone in the same direction in which the child had seen the smoke.

The child, with his eye fixed on the imprints, started to follow this step.

II.

THE EFFECT OF SNOW

He walked for a certain time upon this trail. Unfortunately, the tracks became less and less distinct. The snow fell dense and fearful. It was the moment when the hooker was in its death agony, under this same snow, on the high sea.

The child, in distress like the vessel, but in another way, having no other resource in the inextricable counter-crossings of darkness which reared up before him, but that foot-mark, clung to this step as to the clue of the labyrinth.

Suddenly, either because the snow had ended by leveling them, or for some other reason, the footprints were obliterated. All became smooth, even, level, without a spot, without a mark. There was nothing but a white cloth on the ground and a black cloth upon the sky. It seemed as though the woman who had passed had flown away.

The child, at bay, stooped down and

searched. In vain. As he arose, he had the sensation of something indistinct which he heard, but which he was not sure of hearing. It resembled a voice, a breath, a shadow. It was more human than animal, and more sepulchral than living. It was a noise, but a dreamy one.

He looked and saw nothing.

The wide, naked, livid solitude was before him.

He listened. What he fancied that he had heard had faded away. Perhaps he had heard nothing. He listened again. All was silent.

There was illusion in all that mist. He started on his way again.

He walked forward at random now, not having this step to guide him henceforth.

He had hardly moved away, when the sound began again. This time he could not doubt. It was a groan, almost a sob.

He turned around. He let his eyes wander over the darkened space. He saw nothing.

The sound arose anew. If imprisoned souls can cry out, it is thus they cry.

Nothing so penetrating, so poignant, and so weak as that voice. For it was a voice. It came from a soul. There was palpitation in that murmur. Nevertheless it seemed to be almost unconsciously uttered. It was something like suffering making an appeal, but

without knowing that it was a suffering or that it made an appeal. This cry, perhaps a first breath, perhaps a last sigh, was equally distant from the rattle which closes life, and the wail which opens it. It breathed, it choked, it wept. A sombre supplication in the invisible.

The child fixed his attention everywhere, far, near, in the distance, above, below. There was no one. There was nothing.

He listened. The voice was heard again. He perceived it distinctly. The voice was something like the bleating of a lamb.

Then he was frightened, and thought of flight.

The wail began again. It was the fourth time. It was strangely miserable and plaintive. One felt that after this last effort, more mechanical than voluntary, the cry would probably die out. It was an expiring demand, instinctively made on whatever succor there is floating in space; it was an inexplicable stammer of agony addressed to a possible providence. The child advanced in the direction whence the voice came.

Still he saw nothing.

He advanced farther, closely watching.

The plaint continued. From being inarticulate and confused, it had become clear and almost vibrating. The child was quite close to the voice. But where was it?

He was close to a wail. The trembling of a wail in space was passing beside him. A human moan, floating in the invisible, was what he had just met. Such at least was his impression, dim as the dense fog in which he was lost.

As he was hesitating between an instinct which urged him to fly, and an instinct which told him to stay, he perceived in the snow at his feet a few steps in front of him, a sort of undulation, the size of a human body, a small low elevation, long and narrow like the mound over a grave, something like a sepulchre in a white cemetery.

At the same time, the voice cried out.

It came out from beneath that.

The child stooped, crouched before the undulation, and began clearing it away with his two hands.

Beneath the snow which he removed, he saw a form model itself, and all at once under his hands, in the hollow which he had made, there appeared a pale face.

It was not this face which was crying. Its eyes were shut, and its mouth open, but full of snow.

It was motionless. It did not stir under the child's hand. The child, whose fingers were numb with frost, shivered as he touched the cold of that face. It was a woman's head.

Her disheveled hair was mingled with the snow. This woman was dead.

The child again set himself to remove the snow. The dead woman's neck was freed, then the upper part of the trunk, the skin of which could be seen under rags.

Suddenly, he felt a feeble movement under his groping touch. It was something small, which was buried, and which stirred. The child swiftly cleared away the snow, and discovered a wretched undeveloped body, wan with cold, still alive, and naked on the dead woman's naked breast.

It was a little girl.

She was swaddled, but not with enough rags, and in struggling she had freed herself from her tatters. Her poor thin limbs beneath her and her breath above her, had made the snow melt a little. A nurse would have thought her five or six months old; but she was, perhaps, a year old, for, in poverty, growth undergoes heart-rending stuntings, which sometimes go as far as rickets. When her face came to the air, she uttered a cry, the continuation of her sob of distress. Her mother must have been most certainly dead, not to have heard that sob.

The child took the little one in his arms.

The stiffened mother was fearful. A spectral irradiation issued from that face. The gaping,

breathless mouth seemed to be beginning, in the indistinct language of the shades, the reply to the questions put to the dead in the invisible world. The wan reflection of the icy plains lay upon that visage. One could see the youthful brow beneath brown locks, the almost indignant contraction of the eyebrows, the drawn nostrils, the closed lids, the lashes glued by the frost, and in the corners of the eyes, in the corners of the lips, the deep fold of tears. The snow lighted up the dead woman. Winter and the tomb do not antagonize each other. The corpse is the icicle of man. The nakedness of her breasts was pathetic. They had fulfilled their purpose; they had upon them the sublime blight of life given by the creature in whom life is lacking, and maternal majesty replaced virginal purity. At the tip of one of the breasts there was a white pearl. It was a drop of frozen milk.

Let us say at once, that in those plains where the lost boy was passing in his turn, a beggar woman, nursing her child, and seeking shelter, had lost her way a few hours before. Benumbed, she had fallen beneath the storm, and had been unable to rise. The avalanche had covered her. She had pressed her little girl to her bosom as much as she could and had died.

The little girl had tried to suck that marble breast.

Blind trust, ordained by nature; for it appears that it is possible for a mother to suckle her child one last time, even after the last sigh.

But the child's mouth had not been able to find the breast, where the drop of milk, stolen by death, had frozen, and, under the snow the nursling, more accustomed to the cradle than the tomb, had cried.

The little abandoned creature had heard the little dying one.

He had dug her out.

He had taken her in his arms.

When the little one felt herself in his arms she stopped crying. The two children's faces touched, and the purple lips of the nursling drew near the boy's cheek as to a breast.

The little girl was almost in that condition when the coagulated blood is about to stop the heart. Her mother had already given her something of her death; the corpse communicates itself, it is a contagious chilling. The little one's feet, hands, arms, knees, seemed paralyzed by the ice. The boy felt the terrible cold.

He had one dry and warm garment on, his reefer. He laid the nursling on the dead woman's breast, took off his jacket, wrapped

the little girl in it, picked up the child, and, almost naked now, himself, under the puffs of snow, which the north wind blew, carrying the little one in his arms, he set out on his way once more.

The little one, having succeeded in finding the boy's cheek again, pressed her mouth to it, and, warm once more, fell asleep. First kiss of these two souls in the world of darkness.

The mother remained lying there, her back in the snow, her face towards night. But, at the moment when the little boy stripped himself to clothe the little girl, from the depths of infinity, where she was, perhaps that mother saw him.

III.

EVERY SORROWFUL ROAD BECOMES MORE INTRICATE BY ITS BURDENS

It was a little over four hours since the hooker had sailed away from Portland creek, leaving this boy on the shore. In the long hours since he had been deserted and had been walking straight before him, he had had but three encounters in that human society into which he was perhaps to enter—a man, a woman, and a child. A man, that man on the hill; a woman, that woman in the snow; a child, that little girl whom he held in his arms.

He was worn out with hunger and fatigue.

He advanced more resolutely than ever, with less strength and an added burden.

He was now almost without clothing. The few rags which he had left, hardened by the frost, were as sharp as glass, and cut his skin. He was growing colder, but the other child was growing warm. What he lost was not lost, she gained it. He noticed this

warmth which was a renewal of life for the poor little one. He continued to advance.

From time to time, yet holding her firmly, he stooped, and taking a handful of snow, rubbed his feet with it, to keep them from freezing.

At other moments, his throat being on fire, he put a little of that snow in his mouth, and sucked it, which deceived his thirst for a minute, but changed it into fever. A relief which was an aggravation.

The storm had become shapeless by its very violence. Deluges of snow are possible; this was one. This paroxysm maltreated the coast at the same time that it heaved the sea. This was probably the moment when the distracted hooker was breaking up, in the battle with the reefs.

Under this blast, always walking eastward, he crossed wide stretches of snow. He did not know what time it was. For a long time he had seen no more smoke. Such indications are soon effaced in night; besides it was past the hour when fires are put out; in short, perhaps he had been mistaken, and it was possible that there was neither town nor village in the direction whither he was going.

In this doubt he persevered.

Two or three times the little one cried. Then he gave his gait a rocking motion; she

grew quiet and was silent. She ended by falling fast asleep, and sleeping soundly. He felt that she was warm while he shivered.

He frequently tightened the folds of the jacket closer around the little one's neck, so that the frost should not get in by some opening, and so there might be no trickling of melted snow between the garment and the child.

The plain was undulating. On the declivities where it sloped away, the snow piled up by the wind in the folds of the surface was so deep for the little fellow that he was almost entirely buried in it, and he had to walk half buried. He walked, pushing the snow away with his knees.

Having cleared the ravine, he came to high lands, swept by the gale, where the snow was thin. There he found sheet ice.

The little girl's lukewarm breath, playing on his face, warmed him a moment, then stopped and froze in his hair where it made an icicle.

He was conscious of a new danger, he could no longer afford to fall. He felt that he would not be able to rise again. He was broken down with fatigue, and the leaden weight of darkness would have fixed him to the ground, as it had done to the dead woman, and the ice would have soldered him alive to

the ground. He had slipped down the slopes of precipices and had escaped; he had stumbled into holes, and got out again; henceforward, a simple fall would be death. One false step opened a tomb. He must not slip. He would not have even the strength to rise to his knees.

Now all about him was slippery; all was hoar-frost and hardened snow.

The little girl he carried made walking frightfully difficult; she was not only an excessive weight for his weariness and exhaustion, but she was a hindrance. She took up both his arms, and for anyone walking on ice two arms are a natural and necessary balancing pole.

He had to do without this balancing pole.

He did without it, and walked on, not knowing what was to become of him under his burden.

This little one was the drop that made his cup of distress overflow.

He advanced, wavering every step, as if on a spring-board, and accomplishing miracles of equilibrium with no one to see them. Perhaps, however, let us repeat it, he was followed on this doleful road by eyes open in the shadowy distance, the eye of the mother and the eye of God.

He staggered, reeled, regained his footing,

took care of the child, pulled the reefer over her, covered her head, nearly tripped again, continued to advance, slipped, then pulled himself up. The wind was cowardly enough to push him.

He probably went much farther than was necessary. To all appearance he was in those plains where, later on, Bincleaves Farm was established, between what is now called Spring Gardens and Parsonage House. Farms and cottages now, wastes then. Often less than a century separates a steppe from a city.

Suddenly, a lull having occurred in the glacial squall which blinded him, he saw at a little distance in front of him a group of gables and chimneys thrown into relief by the snow; the reverse of a silhouette, a city outlined in white on the black horizon, something like what we would call a negative proof nowadays.

Roofs, dwellings, a shelter! At last he was somewhere! He felt the ineffable encouragement of hope. The lookout of a ship astray, shouting, Land! experiences such emotions. He hastened his steps.

At length he was near men. He was going to reach living creatures. Nothing more was to be feared. He felt within him that sudden glow of security. That which he was escaping from was over. There would be no more night

henceforth, nor winter, nor storm. It seemed to him that everything that was possible in evil was now behind him. The little one was no longer a weight. He almost ran.

His eye was fixed upon those roofs. Life was there. He never took his eyes off them. The dead would gaze thus at that which appeared to them through the yawning lid of a tomb. Those were the chimneys whose smoke he had seen.

No smoke came out of them.

It did not take him long to reach the dwellings. He reached the suburb of a town which was an open street. At that epoch the barring of streets at night was falling into disuse.

The street began with two houses. In those two houses neither candle nor lamp was to be seen, no more than in the whole street, nor in the whole town, as far as the eye could reach.

The house on the right was more like a roof than a house; nothing could be meaner; the walls were of loam, and the roof of straw; there was more thatch than wall. A great nettle springing from the foot of the wall touched the edge of the roof. This hovel had but one door, which looked like a cat-hole, and but one window, which was a garret skylight. The whole thing was closed. On one side an inhabited pigsty showed that the hut was inhabited also.

The house on the left was large, high, all of stone, with a slate roof. Closed also. It was the Rich Man's home opposite the Poor Man's home.

The boy did not hesitate.

He went to the large house.

The double door, a massive checker-board of oak with huge nails, was one of those behind which one fancies a stout outfit of locks and bolts; an iron knocker hung from it.

He raised the knocker with some difficulty, for his benumbed hands were stumps rather than hands. He struck a blow.

No one answered.

He knocked a second time, and two raps.

No movement was made in the house.

He knocked a third time. Nothing.

He understood that they were asleep, or that they did not care to rise.

Then he turned towards the poor house. He picked a pebble from the ground out of the snow, and knocked at the low door.

No one answered.

He raised himself on tiptoe, and knocked upon the window with his pebble, softly enough, so as not to break the pane, loud enough to be heard.

No voice was raised, no step stirred, no candle was lighted.

He thought that there too, they did not want to wake up.

In the stone mansion and in the thatched dwelling there was the same deafness towards the wretched.

The boy decided to push on farther, and penetrated into the strait of houses, which prolonged itself before him, so dark that it seemed more like the opening between two cliffs than the entrance to a town.

IV.

ANOTHER FORM OF THE DESERT

It was Weymouth which he had just entered.

The Weymouth of that time was not the honorable and superb Weymouth of to-day. That ancient Weymouth had not, like the present Weymouth, an irreproachable rectilinear quay with a statue and an inn, in honor of George III. This was because George III. was not yet born. For the same reason they had not as yet on the slope of the green hill on the east, and flat on the ground, by means of scalping the turf and laying bare the chalk, designed that *White Horse*, an acre long, bearing a king on his back, and turning, always in honor of George III., his tail towards the city. These honors, however, were deserved; George III., having lost in his old age the wits which he never had in his youth, is not responsible for the calamities of his reign. He was a simpleton. Why should he not have statues?

The Weymouth of a hundred and eighty

years ago was almost as symmetrical as a tangled game of jack-straws. The Ashtoreth of the legends, sometimes took a walk on earth, bearing at her back a wallet which contained everything, even good-wives in their houses. A pell-mell of huts tumbled out of this devil's sack would give an idea of this irregular Weymouth, to which might be added the good-wives in the huts. There remains, as a specimen of these dwellings, the House of the Musicians. A confusion of wooden dens, sculptured and worm-eaten, which is another sort of sculpture; shapeless, tottering, overhanging buildings, some with pillars, leaning up against each other to keep from falling before the sea-wind, and leaving between them the scanty spaces for narrow and winding channels, alleys, and squares, often inundated by equinoctial tides, a heaping-up of old grandmother houses, grouped around a great-grandmother church,—such was Weymouth. Weymouth was a sort of antique Norman village, stranded on the coast of England.

The traveler, if he entered the tavern replaced by the hotel of to-day, instead of royally paying twenty-five francs for a fried sole and a bottle of wine, would have had the humiliation of eating a fish soup for a penny, which, notwithstanding, was very good. It was wretched!

The lost child, carrying the foundling, followed the first street, then the second, then a third. He raised his eyes, seeking in the upper stories, and on the roofs, some lighted pane, but all was closed and dark. At intervals, he knocked at the doors. No one answered. Nothing makes the heart so stony, as being warmly tucked between two sheets. This noise, and these knocks, had finally awakened the little girl. He knew it, because he felt her suck his cheek. She did not cry, believing him her mother.

He was in danger of turning and roaming for a long time, perhaps, in the intersections of the lanes of Scrambridge, where there were then more fields than houses, and more thorn-hedges than buildings, but he opportunely turned in a passage, which exists to this day, near Trinity Schools. This passage led him to a strand which was a rudiment of a quay with a parapet, and, at his right, he made out a bridge.

This bridge was the Wey bridge, which connects Weymouth to Melcombe-Regis, and under whose arches, the Harbor communicates with the Back-Water.

Weymouth, then a hamlet, was the suburb of the city and port of Melcombe-Regis; today Melcombe-Regis is a parish of Weymouth. The village has absorbed the city. It was the bridge that did this work. Bridges are singu-

lar suction machines, which inhale population, and sometimes one river district grows at the expense of its opposite neighbor.

The boy went to this bridge, which at that time was a covered wooden foot-bridge. He crossed this foot-bridge.

Thanks to the roof of the bridge, there was no snow on the flooring. His bare feet had a moment of comfort, while walking on these dry planks.

The bridge crossed, he found himself in Melcombe-Regis.

Here there were fewer wooden than stone houses. It was no longer the suburb, it was the city. The bridge opened upon a rather fine street, which was Saint-Thomas street. He entered it. The street presented lofty carved gables, and here and there shop-fronts. He began to knock at doors once more. He had not strength enough left to call and shout.

At Melcombe-Regis, as at Weymouth, no one stirred. A good double turn had been given to the locks. The windows were covered with their shutters, as the eyes, by their lids. Every precaution had been taken against the disagreeable shock of awakening.

The little wanderer felt the indefinable impression of the sleeping city. A vertigo emanates from the silence of these paralyzed ant-hills. All these lethargies mingle their

nightmares, these slumbers are a throng, and from those prostrate human bodies there arises a vapor of dreams. Sleep has dark vicinities outside of life; the decomposed thought of sleepers floats above them, a dead and living vapor, and combines with the possible, which, no doubt, also thinks in space. Hence, entanglements. Dream, that cloud, superposes its folds and its transparencies upon that star, the mind. Above those closed eyelids, where vision has replaced sight, a sepulchral disintegration of outlines and aspects, dilates in the impalpable. A scattering of mysterious existences is amalgamated with our life, on that boundary of death, called sleep. These intertwinings of shades and souls are in the air. Even he, who is not asleep, feels this environment, full of an ominous life, weigh upon him. The moving chimera, which is a guessed-at reality, makes him uneasy. The waking man, who wends his way through these phantoms of the sleep of others, and confusedly pushes back passing forms, has, or thinks he has, the vague horror of hostile contact with the invisible, and, at every moment, feels the obscure pressure of an inexpressible encounter which vanishes. There are forest effects in this walk amid the nocturnal diffusion of dreams.

This is what is called being afraid without knowing why.

What a man experiences, a child experiences still more.

This uneasy feeling of nocturnal fright, increased by these spectral houses, added itself to all that doleful weight under which he was struggling.

He entered Cony-car Lane, and at the end of that passage he saw the Back-Water which he took for the Ocean; he no longer knew on which side the sea was; he retraced his steps, turned to the left by Maiden Street and went back as far as Saint-Alban's Row.

There, at random, and without choosing, he knocked violently, at the first houses he came to. These knocks, in which he exhausted his last energies, were irregular and jerky, with almost irritated intermissions and renewals. It was the beating of his fever, knocking at the doors.

One voice answered.

That of the hour.

Three o'clock in the morning struck slowly behind him from the old belfry of Saint-Nicholas. Then all sank into silence again.

It may seem surprising that not one inhabitant should have even half-opened a lattice. However, in a certain measure, this silence can be explained. It must be stated, that just before January, 1690, there had been a somewhat severe pestilence in London, and

that the fear of receiving sick vagabonds caused a certain diminution of hospitality. People would not even open their windows on a crack, for fear of breathing their miasma.

The child felt that the coldness of men was more terrible than the cold of the night. It was an intentional coldness. He felt a tightening in his despairing heart, which he had not felt in the solitudes. Now, he had entered into the life of all men, and he remained alone. This was the climax of anguish. He had understood the pitiless desert; but the inexorable town was too much.

The hour, whose strokes he had just counted, had been another blow.

There is nothing so chilling in certain cases, as the striking of the hour. It is a declaration of indifference. It is Eternity saying, "What do I care!"

He stopped. And it is not certain whether, in that miserable minute, he did not ask himself, if it would not be easier to lie down there and die. However, the little girl laid her head on his shoulder, and fell asleep again. This blind confidence set him off once more.

He, who had nothing around him but crumbled hopes, felt that he was a point of support. Deep-seated summons of duty.

Neither these ideas, nor this situation, were those of age. It is probable that he did not

understand them. He acted instinctively. He did what he did.

He walked in the direction of Johnstone Row.

But he no longer walked, he dragged himself.

He left Saint-Mary's Street on his left, made zigzags through alleys and, at the mouth of a winding passage between two hovels, found himself in a rather wide open space. This was waste land, not built upon, probably the spot where Chesterfield Place is to-day. The houses ended there. He perceived the sea at his right, and scarcely anything more of the town on his left.

What was to become of him? Here was the country again. On the east, great inclined planes of snow marked the broad slopes of Radipole. Should he continue this journey? Should he advance and re-enter the solitudes? Should he retreat and go back to the streets? What was he to do between those two silences, the dumb plain and the deaf town? Which of these two refusals should he choose?

There is the anchor of mercy, there is the mercy-imploring look as well. It was this look which the poor, despairing little fellow cast round him. All at once he heard a threat.

V.

MISANTHROPY PLAYS ITS PRANKS

A strange and alarming gnashing of teeth reached him through the darkness.

It was enough to make one draw back. He advanced.

To those who are terrified by silence a roar is agreeable.

This fierce snarl re-assured him. This threat was a promise. There was a living, waking being there, even though it might be a wild beast. He walked in the direction of the gnashing.

He turned the angle of a wall, and behind it, by the reflection of the snow and the sea, a sort of wide sepulchral illumination, he saw something placed there, as if for shelter. It was a cart, unless it was a cabin. It had wheels, so it was a carriage; and it had a roof, so it was a dwelling. From the roof rose a pipe, and from the pipe, smoke. The smoke was ruddy, which seemed to announce a pretty good fire inside. At the back pro-

jecting hinges indicated a door, and in the centre of this door, a square opening permitted a view of the light in the hut. He approached.

That which had gnashed noticed his coming. When he was near the hut, the threat became furious. It was no longer a growl that he had to deal with, but a howl. He heard a sharp sound, like that of a chain violently stretched and two rows of sharp white teeth appeared abruptly beneath the door, in the space between the two hind wheels.

At the same time that the jaws appeared between the wheels, a head was thrust out of the window.

"Peace there!" said the head.

The jaws became silent.

The head resumed:

"Is anyone there?"

The child replied:

"Yes."

"Who?"

"I."

"You? Who is that? Where do you come from?"

"I am tired," said the child.

"What o'clock is it?"

"I am cold."

"What are you doing there?"

"I am hungry."

The head replied:

"Everybody cannot be as happy as a lord. Go away!"

The head drew back, and the window closed.

The child bowed his head, pressed the sleeping, little girl in his arms, and gathered up his strength to set out on his road once more. He took a few steps, and was beginning to go away.

However, at the same time that the window had closed, the door had opened. A step had been let down. The voice which had just spoken to the child cried angrily from the end of the hut:

"Well, why don't you come in?"

The child turned round.

"Come in, will you," repeated the voice. "Who has sent me a good-for-nothing like this, who is hungry and cold and who does not come in?"

The child attracted and repulsed at once remained motionless.

The voice broke out again:

"I tell you to come in, you scamp."

He made up his mind and placed one foot on the lowest step of the stairs.

But there was a growl under the wagon.

He drew back. The open jaws reappeared.

"Peace!" cried the man's voice.

The jaws retreated. The growling ceased.

"Come up!" said the man.

The child painfully climbed up the three steps. He was embarrassed by the other child, who was so benumbed, wrapped and rolled in the sou'wester that nothing of her could be distinguished, and she was only a little shapeless mass.

He got up the three steps, and having reached the threshold he stopped.

No candle was burning in the cabin, probably on account of the economy of poverty. The hut was lighted only by the red glow from the draught-hole of a cast-iron stove in which a peat fire was crackling. On the stove, a bowl and a pot, containing to all appearances something to eat, were steaming. The good odor was noticeable. This dwelling was furnished with a chest, a stool, and a lantern, not lighted, which hung from the ceiling. In addition, some boards on brackets, and a rack, on which a variety of things hung, were on the walls.

On the shelves, and on the nails, were rows of glasses, copper articles, an alembic, a receptacle somewhat like those used for graining wax, which are called granulators, and a confusion of odd objects, which the child could not have understood, and which were chemist's cooking utensils. The cabin was of an oblong shape, with the stove in front. It was

not even a little room, it was scarcely a large box. The outside was better lighted by the snow, than the inside by the stove. Everything in the hut was indistinct and dim. However, a reflection from the fire on the ceiling allowed one to read there this inscription in large letters: *Ursus, Philosopher.*

The child, in fact, was entering the home of Homo and Ursus. The one has just been heard to growl, and the other, speak.

The child, on reaching the threshold, perceived near the stove a tall, hairless, lean, old man, dressed in gray, who was standing, and whose bald crown touched the roof. This man could not have stood on tiptoe. The cabin was a tight fit.

"Come in," said the man, who was Ursus.

The child went in.

"Put down your bundle there."

The child put his burden on the chest, carefully, for fear of frightening and wakening it.

The man resumed:

"How gently you put that down! You couldn't do more if it were a reliquary. Are you afraid of cracking your rags? Ah! The abominable good-for-nothing! In the streets at this hour! Who are you? Answer. No, don't, I forbid you to answer. Let us attend to the most pressing things; you're cold. Warm yourself."

And he pushed him before the stove by his two shoulders.

"Well, you are wet enough! and frozen enough. Well, if it is not against all law and order to come in a house like that! Come, take off all that rotten stuff, you malefactor."

And with one hand, and feverish abruptness, he dragged off his rags, which stripped into lint, while with the other, he unhooked a man's shirt, and one of those knitted jackets which are still called "kiss-me-quick," from a nail.

"Here, take these duds."

He chose a woolen rag out of the heap, and rubbed the dazed and fainting child's limbs before the fire with it, who in this moment of warm nakedness thought he was seeing and touching heaven. When his limbs were rubbed the man wiped his feet.

"Well, carcass, there is nothing of you frozen. I was fool enough to be afraid that there might be something frozen, either your hind or fore paws! He won't be crippled this time. Dress yourself."

The child put on the shirt and the man slipped the knitted jacket over it.

"Now."

The man shoved the bench forward with his foot, and made the little boy sit down, push-

ing him by the shoulders, as before, and then pointed his forefinger at the bowl smoking on the stove. What the child caught a glimpse of, in this bowl, was something more of heaven, namely, a potato and a bit of bacon.

"You are hungry, eat."

The man took a crust of hard bread and an iron fork from a shelf and handed them to the child. The child hesitated.

"Must I set the table?" said the man.

And he placed the bowl on the child's knees.

"Bite into all that!"

Hunger overcame astonishment. The child began to eat. The poor creature devoured rather than ate. The joyous sound of crunched bread filled the hut. The man kept grumbling.

"Not so fast, you horrible guzzler. What a glutton this scoundrel is. These hungry blackguards eat in a revolting way. You only need to see a lord at supper. In my time I have seen dukes eat. They don't eat. That's the noble way. But, on the other hand, they drink! Come, you young wild boar, stuff yourself."

The absence of ears which characterizes the famished belly, made the child very indifferent to this violence of epithet, which was nevertheless tempered by a kindliness of action,

which was an inconsistency in his favor. For the moment he was absorbed by these two needs, and these two ecstasies—getting warm and eating.

Ursus continued muttering softly to himself:

"I have seen King James in person supping in the Banqueting House, where one can admire the paintings of the famous Rubens; his Majesty touched nothing, this beggar browses! browse, the very word is derived from brute. What put it into my head to come to this Weymouth, seven times offered up to the infernal gods! I have sold nothing since morning, I have talked to the snow, I have played the flute to the hurricane, I have not pocketed a farthing, and at night paupers settle down on me! Hideous country! There is battle, struggle and competition, between the fools in the street and myself. They try to give me nothing but farthings. I try to give them only worthless drugs. Well, to-day, there was nothing at all! Not an idiot in the square, not a penny in the till! Eat, you boy of hell! Twist and crunch! We live in a time when nothing equals the cynicism of spongers. Grow fat at my expense, parasite. He is more than starved, he is mad, that creature. It is not appetite, it's ferocity. He is carried away by a rabid virus. Who knows? Perhaps he has

the plague. Have you the plague, you brigand? What if he were to give it to Homo! No, never! Let the rabble perish, but I don't want my wolf to die. By the way, I'm hungry too. I declare this is a disagreeable incident. I have worked far into the night to-day. There are times in a man's life when he is in a hurry. So I was, this evening, to eat. I was all alone, I made a fire, I only had a potato, a crust of bread, a mouthful of bacon, and a drop of milk, and I set that to warm. I said to myself, 'Good!' I imagined I was going to feed myself. Bang! This crocodile must needs fall on me, just at that moment. He plants himself squarely between my food and me. And now my larder is raided. Eat, pike, eat, shark, how many rows of teeth have you in your jaw? Guzzle, you wolf-cub. No. I withdraw the word out of respect for wolves. Swallow up my food, boa! I have worked to-day, and far into the night, with an empty stomach, an aching throat, my pancreas in distress, my entrails worn out, and my reward is to see some one else eat. Never mind, we will divide. He shall have the bread, the potato and the bacon, but I will have the milk."

At this moment a prolonged and lamentable cry arose in the hut. The man pricked up his ears.

"Now you are bawling, sycophant! Why are you bawling?"

The boy turned around. It was evident that he was not crying. He had his mouth full.

The cry did not stop.

The man went to the chest.

"So it is the bundle that is squalling! Valley of Jehoshaphat! Now the bundle is howling! What has your bundle got to croak about?"

He unrolled the sou'wester. A child's head came out of it, open-mouthed and crying.

"Well, who goes there?" said the man. "What is this? Here is another of them. Isn't this thing going to end? Halt there! To arms! Corporal, call out the guard! Second slap-bang! What have you brought me here, you young robber! Don't you see it is thirsty? Come. This thing must drink. Good! I shall not have even the milk now."

From a jumble of things on a shelf he took down a roll of linen bandage, a sponge and a vial, muttering frantically:

"Damned country!"

Then he looked at the little one.

"It is a girl. One can tell that by her yelping. She is drenched, too."

He tore off the rags in which she was knotted, rather than dressed, as he had done

for the boy, and wrapped her in a poor, but clean and dry strip of coarse linen. This quick and rough dressing exasperated the little girl.

"She meows inexorably," said he.

He cut off a long piece of sponge with his teeth, tore off a square of linen from the roll, drew out a thread of it, took the pot, in which there was some milk, from the stove, filled the vial with this milk, inserted the sponge half way into the neck, covered the sponge with the linen, tied this stopper with the thread, put the vial against his cheek to make sure it was not too hot, and seized the distracted swaddling, who was still screaming, under his left arm.

"There, sup, you creature! Take the nipple for me."

And he put the neck of the vial in her mouth.

The little one drank greedily.

He held the vial at the necessary inclination, grumbling:

"They are all the same, the mean things! When they have what they want, they hold their tongues."

The little one had sucked so energetically, and had seized this bit of breast offered by this surly providence with so much avidity, that she was seized with a fit of coughing.

"You'll choke yourself," growled Ursus. "A nice glutton, this one, too."

He drew away the sponge she was sucking, allowed the cough to subside and replaced the vial between her lips, saying:

"Suck, you gadabout!"

Meanwhile, the boy had laid down his fork; seeing the little one drink made him forget to eat. A moment before, while he ate, what he had in his look was satisfaction, now it was gratitude. He looked at the little one revive. This completion of the resurrection begun by him filled his eyes with an ineffable brilliancy. Ursus continued mumbling angry words between his teeth. Now and then the little boy raised his eyes, moist with the indefinable emotion which the poor, ill-treated and deeply affected creature felt, without being able to express, towards Ursus.

Ursus flung out at him furiously:

"Well, why don't you eat?"

"And you," said the child, trembling all over, and a tear in his eye, "you will have none?"

"Will you just eat that all up, you brat! There is none too much for you, since there was not enough even for me."

The child took up his fork again, but did not eat.

"Eat!" vociferated Ursus. "What have I got to do with it? Who is talking to you about me? You wretched little barefooted

clerk of Penniless parish, I tell you, eat it all up. You are here to eat, drink, and sleep. Eat or I'll throw you out of doors, you and your brat."

Upon this threat the boy began to eat again. He had not much to do to finish what remained in the bowl.

Ursus muttered:

"This edifice is badly joined, the cold comes in through the panes."

In fact, a pane had been broken in front by some jolt of the vehicle or by some stone thrown by a mischievous boy. Ursus had stuck a star of paper on this fracture, and it had become unpasted. The wind came in there.

He was half seated on the chest. The little one, at once in his arms and on his knees, was voluptuously sucking her bottle with that dreamy beatitude of cherubim before God and infants at the breast.

"She is drunk," said Ursus.

And he continued:

"Now, just preach sermons on temperance!"

The wind tore the paper-plaster from the pane, it went flying through the hut, but it was not enough to disturb the two children busy coming back to life.

While the little girl drank and the little boy ate, Ursus vented his spleen.

"Drunkenness begins in swaddling clothes. Take the trouble to be Bishop Tillotson and to thunder against excess in drink. . . . Hateful draught of wind! And besides, my stove is old. It lets enough puffs of smoke escape to give you the trichiasis. I have the discomfort of cold and the discomfort of fire. One cannot see distinctly. That creature over there is abusing my hospitality. Well, I have not yet been able to make out the animal's face. Comfort is lacking here. By Jupiter, I greatly enjoy exquisite feasts in well-closed rooms. I have missed my vocation, I was born to be sensuous. The greatest of sages is Philoxenes, who wished he had a crane's neck, so that he might enjoy the pleasures of the table at greater length. Receipts for to-day, zero! Not a thing sold all day! Calamity! Inhabitants, lackeys, and citizens, here is the doctor, here is the medicine. You are wasting your time, old fellow. Pack up your drug shop. Everybody is well here. Well, if this is not a cursed town, where not one person is ill! The sky alone has the diarrhœa. What snow! Anaxagoras taught that snow is black. He was right, cold being blackness. Ice is night. What a storm. I can imagine the delight of those who are at sea. A hurricane is the passing of demons, it is the hubbub of storm-fiends galloping and rolling, heels over

head, above our bone-boxes. In the cloud, this one has a tail, that one has horns, the one yonder has a flame for a tongue, that other has claws on his wings, another has the paunch of a lord-chancellor, and still another, an academician's pate, a form can be distinguished in every noise. For each new wind a different demon; the ear listens, the eye sees, the tumult is a face. Egad, there are people at sea, that is certain. Well, friends, get out of the storm as best you may, I have enough to do to get through life. I declare! Do I keep an inn? Why do I have travelers dropping in? Universal distress sends its spatterings even into my poverty. Hideous drops of the great mud of humanity fall into my very hut. I am given up to the voracity of passers-by. I am a prey. The prey of the starvelings. Winter, night, a pasteboard hut, a poor friend underneath it, and outside the tempest, a potato, a fire no bigger than your fist, parasites, the wind coming through every crack, not a penny, and bundles that begin to bark. You open them, and find little beggar-wenches inside. What sort of luck is that! In addition, the laws are violated. Ah! Vagabond, with your mate, mischievous pickpocket, evil-minded abortion. Ah! you go about the streets after curfew, do you? If our good king knew it, he's the one who would have you nicely pitched into the

bottom of an underground cell to teach you a lesson! My gentleman walks out at night with my lady! With the thermometer at fifteen degrees of frost, bareheaded and barefooted! I'd like you to know that that is forbidden. There are rules and regulations, you rioter! Vagabonds are punished, honest people who have their own houses are guarded and protected, kings are the fathers of the people. I am a householder, I am! You would have been whipped on the public square if you had been met, and it would have served you right. There must be order in a civilized state. I was wrong not to report you to the constable. But that is the way with me, I understand what is right, and I do what is wrong. Ah! the ruffian! To come here in such a state! I did not notice their snow when they came in—it has melted. And here is my whole house wet. I have an inundation in my very home. I shall have to burn an incredible amount of coal to dry up this lake. Coal at twelve farthings a measure, too! How are we going to manage to make this hut hold three of us? It is all up with me, now. I am going into the nursery business, and I'm going to have the weaning of the future hope of England's beggardom. I shall have as my employment, office and function, the business of licking into shape all the miscarriages of the great good-for-nothing

Misery, and the improvement of the ugliness of young gallows-birds, and of imparting to young pickpockets the principles of philosophy! The bear's tongue is God's sketching tool. And to think that if I hadn't been gnawed at by this kind of thing for the past thirty years I should be rich, Homo would be fat, I would have a medical cabinet full of rarities, as many surgical instruments as Doctor Linaker, surgeon to King Henry VIII., divers animals of all kinds, Egyptian mummies, and other similar things! I should belong to the College of Doctors, and I should have the right to make use of the library built in 1652 by the celebrated Harvey, and of working in the cupola, whence you can see the whole of the city of London! I might continue my calculations on solar obfuscation, and prove that a caliginous vapor emanates from that heavenly body. That is the opinion of John Kepler, who was born a year before the massacre of Saint Bartholomew, and who was the emperor's mathematician. The sun is a chimney which sometimes smokes. So does my stove. My stove is no better than the sun. Yes, I should have made my fortune, my condition would have been different, I should not be insignificant, I should not be degrading science in the cross-roads. For the masses are not worthy of doctrine, people be-

ing but a crowd of fools, a confused medley of all sorts of ages, sexes, dispositions, and conditions, that wise men of all times have not hesitated to despise, and whose extravagance and fury the most moderate in their justice detest. Ah! I am weary of all that exists. After all, we don't live long. Human life is soon over. Well, no, it *is* long. At intervals, so that we may not become too discouraged, so that we may have the stupidity of consenting to exist, and so that we may not profit by the magnificent opportunities which all ropes and all nails offer us for hanging ourselves, Nature pretends to take a little care of man. Not to-night, however. She makes wheat sprout, she makes the grape ripen, she makes the nightingale sing, this cunning Nature. From time to time, a ray of dawn, or a glass of gin, that is what we call happiness. A narrow border of good around the immense winding-sheet of evil. The devil has made the stuff, and God has made the hem of our destiny. In the meantime, you have eaten my supper, you thief."

Meanwhile, the nursling, whom he still held in his arms, and very gently, even while he fumed, was closing her eyes languidly, a sign of repletion. Ursus looked at the vial, and growled:

"She has drunk it all, the impudent thing."

He arose, and holding the little girl on his left arm, raised the lid of the chest with his right hand, drew out of the inside a bearskin, the one which he called, as will be remembered, his "real skin."

While he was doing this work, he heard the other child eating, and looked at him sideways.

"It will be no joke, if henceforward I have to feed this growing glutton! It will be a tape-worm which I shall have in the vitals of my trade."

With his one free arm he spread the bearskin on the chest as well as he could, working his elbow, and managing his movements so as not to disturb the beginning of the little girl's sleep. Then he laid her down on the fur, on the side nearest the fire.

This done, he set the empty vial on the stove, and exclaimed:

"Now, I'm the thirsty one!"

He looked into the pot; there still remained a few good mouthfuls of milk; he raised the pot to his lips. Just when he was about to drink, his eye fell on the little girl. He put back the pot on the stove, took the vial, uncorked it, emptied into it all the milk that remained, which was just enough to fill it, replaced the sponge, and tied the linen over the sponge around the neck.

"I am hungry and thirsty for all that," said he.

And he added:

"When one cannot eat bread, one must drink water."

A jug without a spout could be seen behind the stove.

He took it and offered it to the boy.

"Do you want to drink?"

The child drank, and then went on eating.

Ursus once more took the jug, and raised it to his mouth. The temperature of the water which it contained had been unequally affected by the neighborhood of the stove. He swallowed a few gulps, and made a face.

"You resemble false friends. A pretence for pure water. You are luke-warm above and cold below."

By this time the boy had finished his supper. The bowl was more than emptied, it was cleaned out. He was thoughtfully picking up and eating a few crumbs scattered in the folds of his jersey and on his knees.

Ursus turned towards him:

"That is not all. Now, for us two. The mouth is not made for eating only, it is made for talking. Now, that you are warmed and stuffed, you animal, look out for yourself, you are going to answer my questions. Where do you come from?"

The child replied:

"I do not know."

"What, you do not know?"

"I was abandoned this evening at the seashore."

"Ah! you scamp! What's your name? He is such a good-for-nothing that his very relatives desert him."

"I have no relations."

"Take my tastes into account a little, and pay attention to the fact that I do not like to have people tell me stories which are not true. You have relatives, since you have a sister."

"She is not my sister."

"She is not your sister?"

"No."

"Who is she, then?"

"A little girl that I found."

"Found!"

"Yes."

"What, did you pick that up?"

"Yes."

"Where? If you lie, I will annihilate you."

"On a woman, who was dead in the snow."

"When?"

"An hour ago."

"Where?"

"A league from here."

Ursus' arched brow contracted and took

that pointed form which characterizes the emotion of a philosopher's eyebrows.

"Dead! Well, there's a lucky creature! She must be left there in her snow. She is well off there. Whereabouts?"

"Towards the sea."

"Did you cross the bridge?"

"Yes."

Ursus opened the window at the back, and considered the look of things outside. The weather had not improved. The snow fell heavily and mournfully.

He closed the casement.

He went to the broken pane, stopped the hole with a rag, put more peat in the stove, spread out the bearskin on the chest, as wide as he could, took a large book which he had in a corner and put it under the head-part for a pillow, and on this bolster he put the little girl's head.

He turned towards the boy:

"Lie down there."

The boy obeyed and stretched out at full length beside the little girl.

Ursus rolled the bearskin around the two children, and tucked it under their feet.

He reached up to a shelf and knotted a linen belt with a large pocket around his body, containing, no doubt, a case of surgeon's instruments and some vials of elixirs.

Then he unhooked the lantern from the ceiling and lit it. It was a dark lantern. When lighted it left the children in darkness.

Ursus partly opened the door and said:

"I am going out. Do not be afraid. I am coming back. Go to sleep."

And letting down the steps, he called:

"Homo!"

A tender growl answered him.

Ursus, lantern in hand, went down, the steps went up again, the door closed. The children remained alone.

Outside, a voice, which was the voice of Ursus, asked:

"You boy, who have just eaten my supper! —say, you are not asleep yet?"

"No," replied the boy.

"Well, if she bellows, you'll give her the rest of that milk."

The click of a chain being unfastened was heard, and the sound of a man's footsteps mingled with the tread of a beast, retreating.

A few moments later the two children slept soundly.

It was a strange, ineffable mingling of breaths; it was more than chastity, it was ignorance; a bridal night before the consciousness of sex. The little boy and the little girl, lying naked side by side, had a shadowy

seraphic fusion during these silent hours; the amount of dream possible at that age floated from one to the other; under their closed eyelids there was probably the light of stars; if the word marriage be not inappropriate here, they were husband and wife after the manner of angels. Such innocence in such darkness, such purity in such an embrace; these anticipations of heaven are possible only to childhood, and no immensity approaches the grandeur of little children. Of all gulfs, this is the deepest. The terrible persistence of a dead man chained beyond life, the mighty fury of the ocean against a wreck, the vast whiteness of snow, covering up buried forms, do not equal, in pathos, two children's mouths, meeting divinely in sleep, and whose touch is not even a kiss. Betrothal, perchance; perchance catastrophe. The unknown weighs upon this juxtaposition. It is charming; who knows if it is not terrifying? It makes one's heart contract. Innocence is above virtue. Innocence is made of sacred obscurity. They slept. They were peaceful. They were warm. The nakedness of the intertwined bodies amalgamated the virginity of the souls. They lay there, as in the nest of the abyss.

VI.

THE AWAKENING

Day begins ominously. A sad, pale light entered the hut. It was the icy dawn. That wan light, which sketches into funereal reality the outlines of things which are blurred into spectral forms by night, did not wake the children sleeping close together. The hut was warm. Their two respirations could be heard, alternating like two quiet waves. There was no more hurricane outdoors. The light of dawn was slowly taking possession of the horizon. The constellations were being extinguished like candles blown out one after the other. Only a few large stars still held out. The deep chant of the Infinite rose from the sea.

The fire was not quite out. The faint light was gradually becoming broad daylight. The boy slept less soundly than the girl. There was something of the watcher and the guardian in him. As a ray brighter than the others came through the pane he opened his

eyes; the sleep of childhood ends in oblivion; he remained in a semi-drowsiness, without knowing where he was, nor what he had near him, without trying to remember, looking at the ceiling and vaguely composing, a dreamy occupation, with the letters of the inscription, *Ursus, Philosopher*, which he was staring at without deciphering, for he did not know how to read.

The sound of a lock fumbled by a key made him crane his neck.

The door moved, the steps turned down on their hinges. Ursus was coming home. He ascended the three steps, his extinguished lantern in his hand.

At the same time, the pattering of four paws lightly scaled the steps. It was Homo, following Ursus, and he too was coming home.

The boy, now awake, gave a start.

The wolf, probably hungry, had on a morning grin, which showed all his very white teeth.

He stopped, half-way up, and placed his two fore paws inside the hut, his two elbows on the threshold, as a preacher leans on the edge of the pulpit. He sniffed at the chest from a distance, not being accustomed to see it inhabited in this way. His wolf's bust, framed by the door, was outlined in black

against the brightness of the morning. He made up his mind and entered.

The boy, on seeing the wolf in the hut, got out of the bearskin, rose, and stood before the little girl, who was sleeping more soundly than ever.

Ursus had just hung the lantern back on the nail in the ceiling. He silently, and with mechanical deliberation, unbuckled the belt, containing the set of instruments, and put it back on the shelf. He looked at nothing, and seemed to see nothing. His eye was glassy. Something deep was at work in his mind. His thought at length came to light, as usual, by a lively outburst of words. He exclaimed:

"Decidedly happy! Dead, quite dead."

He crouched down, and put a shovelful of ashes in the stove, and as he poked the peat he muttered:

"I had trouble in finding her. Unknown malice had shoved her under two feet of snow. Without Homo, who sees as clearly with his nose as Christopher Columbus did with his mind, I should still be floundering about there in the avalanche and playing hide and seek with death. Diogenes took his lantern and looked for a man, I took my lantern and looked for a woman; he found sarcasm, I found mourning. How cold she was! I touched her hand,—a stone. What silence in

her eyes! How can one be so stupid as to die and leave a child behind! It is not going to be convenient now for this box to hold three. What a windfall! A nice family I have now! A girl and a boy."

While Ursus was speaking, Homo had sidled up close to the stove. The hand of the little sleeper was hanging between the stove and the chest. The wolf began to lick this hand.

He licked it so gently that the little one did not wake.

Ursus turned round.

"All right, Homo. I will be the father and you shall be the uncle."

Then he resumed his philosopher's occupation of arranging the fire without interrupting his "aside."

"Adoption. It is settled. Besides, Homo is willing."

He stood up.

"I would like to know who is responsible for that woman's death. Was it men? or . . . ."

His eye gazed upwards, but beyond the ceiling, and his lips murmured:

"Was it Thou?"

Then his brow drooped as if under a burden, and he resumed:

"The night has taken the trouble to kill this woman."

His glance, as it rose, met the face of the awakened boy who was listening to him. Ursus abruptly challenged him:

"What are you laughing at?"

The boy answered:

"I am not laughing."

Ursus had a sort of shock, scrutinized him sharply and silently for some moments, and said:

"Then you are awful."

The interior of the hut had been so faintly lighted at night, that Ursus had not yet seen the boy's face. Broad daylight showed it to him.

He placed the palms of his two hands on the child's two shoulders, examined his face again with a more and more poignant attention, and shouted at him:

"Now stop laughing!"

"I am not laughing," said the child.

Ursus trembled from head to foot.

"You are laughing, I tell you."

Then shaking the child with a grasp, in which was fury if it was not pity, he violently asked him:

"Who did that to you?"

The child replied:

"I don't know what you mean."

Ursus continued:

"How long have you had that laugh?"

"I have always been so," said the child.

Ursus turned towards the chest, saying in a low voice:

"I thought that this work was no longer done."

He took from the chest, but very softly so as not to awaken her, the book which he had put under the little girl's head as a pillow.

"Let us see Conquest," he murmured.

It was a folio bundle, bound in limp parchment. He turned over the leaves with his thumb, stopped at a page, opened the book wide on the stove, and read:

"*De Denasatis.*—Here it is."

And he continued:

"*Bucca fissa sesque ad aures, genziois denudatis, nasque murdridato, masca eris et ridebis semper.*

"That is it exactly."

And he replaced the book on one of the shelves, grumbling:

"An incident of which the investigation might be unwholesome. Let us stay on the surface. Laugh on, my boy."

The little girl awoke. Her good-morning was a cry.

"Come, nurse, give her the breast," said Ursus.

The little girl sat up. Ursus took the vial from the stove and gave it her to suck.

At that moment the sun rose. It was on a level with the horizon. Its red ray entered through the pane, and struck full upon the face of the little girl, which was turned towards it. The child's eyeballs fixed on the sun reflected that crimson roundness like two mirrors. The eyeballs remained motionless, the lids too.

"Why," said Ursus, "she is blind."

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PART TWO

BY ORDER OF THE KING

BOOK ONE

THE ETERNAL PRESENCE OF THE PAST; MEN REFLECT MAN

I.

LORD CLANCHARLIE

I.

In those times there was an old recollection.

That recollection was Lord Linnæus Clancharlie.

Baron Linnæus Clancharlie, a contemporary of Cromwell, was one of the peers of England, few in number, let us hasten to say, who had accepted the republic. There may have been a reason for this acceptance, and it could be explained, if necessary, from the fact that the republic had for the time been triumphant. It was perfectly natural, that Lord Clancharlie should remain on the side of the republic, so long as the republic had the upper hand. But after the close of the revolution, and after the fall of the Parliamentary government, Lord Clancharlie had persisted. It would have been easy for the noble patrician to return to the re-constituted House of

Lords, repentance always being well received at restorations, and Charles II. was a kindly prince to those who came back to him; but Lord Clancharlie had not understood what men owe to events. While the nation was overwhelming the king with acclamations, on taking possession of England once more, while unanimity was pronouncing its verdict, while the people were bowing their salutations to monarchy, while the dynasty was rising again, in the midst of a glorious and triumphant recantation, at the moment when the past was becoming the future, and when the future was becoming the past, this lord had remained obstinate. He had turned his head away from all this joy; he had voluntarily gone into exile, having it in his power to be a peer, he had preferred being an outlaw, and years had passed away thus; he had grown old in his fidelity to the dead republic. Therefore he was covered with the ridicule which naturally follows this sort of childishness.

He had retired to Switzerland. He lived in a sort of lofty ruin, on the shore of Lake Geneva. He had chosen this dwelling in the most rugged nook of the lake between Chillon, where Bonnivard's dungeon stands, and Vevey, where Ludlow's grave is dug. It was wrapped round by the stern Alps, full of twilights, gusts, and clouds; and he lived there,

lost in the great shadows that fall from mountains. It was a rare thing for a passer-by to meet him. This man was out of his country, almost out of his times. At that time, for those who were well informed, and knew the affairs of the period, no resistance to circumstances was justifiable. England was happy; a restoration is a reconciliation of husband and wife; prince and nation have ceased to live apart; nothing could be more gracious and more smiling; Great Britain beamed; to have a king is a great deal, but they had a charming king in the bargain; Charles II. was amiable, a man of pleasure and a statesman, and great, in the style of Louis XIV.; he was a gentleman and a nobleman; Charles II. was admired by his subjects; he had made war on Hanover, certainly knowing why, but being the only one who knew it; he had sold Dunkirk to France, a manœuvre of high statecraft; the democratic peers of whom Chamberlayne has said: "The accursed republic infected several of the high nobility with its stinking breath," had had the good sense to accept proofs, to conform to the times and to resume their seats in the House of Lords. All that they needed to do for this, was to take the oath of allegiance to the king. When one reflected on all these realities, on that fine reign, that excellent king, those

august princes, given back by divine mercy to the love of the people; when one said to one's self that important personages, such as Monk, and, later on, Jeffreys, had rallied round the throne, that they had been justly rewarded for their loyalty and their zeal by the most magnificent posts and the most lucrative functions; that Lord Clancharlie could not have been ignorant of this; that it depended only upon himself to be seated gloriously beside them in honors; that England had ascended, thanks to her king, to the summit of prosperity; that London was nothing but a round of feasting and pageants; that everyone was opulent and enthusiastic; that the Court was gallant, gay, and superb;—if, by chance, far from these splendors, in an indescribable, lugubrious, half daylight, resembling nightfall, this old man, clad in the same garments as the people, could be seen, pale, abstracted, bent, probably in the direction of the tomb, standing on the bank of the lake, hardly heeding the tempest and winter, walking as if at random, with fixed eyes, white hair fluttering in the wind of the gloom, silent, solitary, pensive, it was difficult not to smile.

A sort of sketch of a madman.

In thinking of Lord Clancharlie, of what he might have been and what he was, it was

charitable to merely smile. Some laughed aloud. Others grew indignant.

It is easy to understand, that serious men were shocked by such insolence of isolation.

There was one extenuating circumstance: Lord Clancharlie had never had any brains. Everyone agreed on that point.

II.

It is disagreeable to see people practise obstinacy. No one likes this Regulus style and it gives rise to irony in public opinion.

These obstinacies seem like reproaches, and it is quite right to laugh at them.

And then, after all, is this stubbornness, this ruggedness, virtue? Is there not a good deal of ostentation in these displays of excessive abnegation and honor? It is more a show than anything else. Why such exaggeration of solitude and exile? To carry nothing to extremes, is the wise man's maxim. Oppose, well and good; blame if you will, but decently, and while you go on shouting "Long live the king!" True virtue consists in being reasonable. That which falls, had to fall; that which succeeds, had to succeed. Providence has its reasons, it crowns the deserving. Do you pretend to know these things better than Providence? When circumstances have determined

things, when one government has replaced another, when the subtraction of the true from the false has been made by success, catastrophe on one side, triumph on the other, then there is no possible doubt, the honest man rallies to the winning side, and although it may be useful to his fortune and his family, without allowing himself to be influenced by that consideration, and only thinking of the public welfare, he lends his aid to the conqueror.

What would become of the State if no one consented to serve? Is everything to come to a standstill? To keep his place, is a good citizen's duty. Learn to sacrifice your secret preferences. Public offices must be filled. Some one must sacrifice himself to them. To be faithful to public functions is one sort of fidelity. The resignation of public officials would paralyze the State. You banish yourself, that is contemptible. Is it to be an example? What vanity! Is it a challenge? What audacity! What important personage do you suppose yourself to be? Learn that we are just as good as you. We do not desert, not we. If we chose, we, too, might be intractable and untamable, and we could do worse things than you. But we prefer to be sensible people. Because I am Trimalcion, you do not think me capable of being Cato! What nonsense!

III.

Never was a situation more clearly defined or more decisive than that of 1660. Never had the course to be pursued been more plainly indicated to a well-ordered mind.

England was free from Cromwell. Under the Republic many irregular facts had taken place. British supremacy had been created; with the aid of the Thirty Years' War, Germany had been dominated, with the help of the Fronde, France had been humiliated, with the help of the Duke of Braganza, the power of Spain had been lessened. Cromwell had tamed Mazarin; in treaties, the Protector of England signed his name above that of the King of France; the United Provinces had been fined eight millions; Algiers and Tunis had been molested; Jamaica conquered, Lisbon humiliated; French rivalry aroused in Barcelona, and Masaniello in Naples; Portugal had been moored to England; there had been a clean sweep of Barbary pirates from Gibraltar to Candia; maritime dominion had been founded under the double form of Victory and Commerce; on August tenth, 1653, the man of thirty-three victories, the old Admiral who called himself *grandfather of sailors*, that Martin Happertz Tromp, who had

beaten the Spanish fleet, had been destroyed by the English fleet; the Atlantic had been taken away from the Spanish navy; the Pacific from the Dutch navy; the Mediterranean from the Venetian navy, and by the Act of Navigation; England had taken possession of the sea-coast of the world; by the ocean she held the world; the Dutch flag humbly saluted the British flag on the high seas; France, in the person of the Ambassador Mancini bent the knee to Oliver Cromwell; this Cromwell played with Calais, and Dunkirk as with two shuttlecocks on a battledore; the Continent had been made to tremble; peace had been dictated, war declared, the English flag raised on every pinnacle; the Protector's single regiment of Ironsides weighed as much as an army in the fears of Europe; Cromwell used to say: "*I will have the English Republic respected as the Roman Republic was respected;*" there was no longer anything sacred to kings; speech was free, the press was free; people said what they chose in the open streets; they printed what they pleased, without control or censorship; the equilibrium of thrones had been destroyed; the whole monarchical order of Europe, of which the Stuarts formed a part, had been overturned; at last, they had emerged from that odious order of things, and England had her absolution.

Charles II. being indulgent had formulated the Declaration of Breda. He had granted to England oblivion of that epoch when the son of a Huntingdon brewer had set his foot on the head of Louis XIV. England was saying her *meâ-culpâ* [I accuse myself], and breathed again. The expansion of hearts, as we have just said, was complete, the gibbets of the regicides, adding to the universal joy. A Restoration is a smile; but just a touch of the gallows is not unbecoming, and the public conscience must be satisfied. The spirit of insubordination had died out; loyalty was re-establishing itself. To be good subjects was thenceforth men's sole ambition. They had recovered from the follies of politics; they scoffed at the Revolution, and jeered at the Republic and those singular times when people always had such big words as *Right*, *Liberty*, *Progress*, in their mouths; they laughed at this bombast. The return to good sense was admirable; England had been dreaming. What happiness to have got beyond these delusions! Was there ever anything more senseless? Where should we be if everybody had rights? Fancy everybody governing? Can one imagine a city ruled by its citizens? Why, the citizens are a team, and the team is not the coachman. To put to the vote, is to cast to the winds. Would you

have states float like clouds? Disorder does not construct order. If Chaos is the architect, the edifice will be a Babel. And then, what a tyranny this pretended liberty is! For my part, I want to amuse myself, and not to govern. Voting is a bore; I want to dance. What a God-send a prince is who will burden himself with the whole thing! Truly, this king is generous to take all this trouble for us! But then, he was brought up to it, he knows what it is. That is his business. Peace, war, legislation, finance, do these things concern the people? Of course, the people must pay; of course, the people must serve, but that ought to be enough for them. They have their share in politics; from them come the two powers of the state, the army and the budget. To be a tax-payer and a soldier, is not that enough? What need is there for anything else? They are the military arm and the financial arm. A magnificent part. Somebody reigns for them. They certainly must requite this service. Taxation, and the civil lists are the salaries paid by nations and earned by princes. The nation gives its blood and its money, by means of which it is led. To want to lead itself, what an absurd idea! It needs a guide. Being ignorant, the nation is blind. Has not the blind man a dog? Only, in the case of a

nation it is a lion, the king, who consents to be the dog. What kindness! But why is the nation ignorant? Because it must be. Ignorance is the guardian of virtue. Where there is no perspective, there is no ambition; the ignorant man is in a useful darkness, which by doing away with sight, does away with covetousness. Hence, innocence. He who reads, thinks, he who thinks, reasons. Not to reason, is a duty; it is also happiness. These truths are incontestable. Society is founded upon them.

Thus sound social doctrines had been re-established in England. Thus had the nation been rehabilitated. At the same time Englishmen were going back to fine literature. They despised Shakspere, and admired Dryden. "*Dryden is the greatest poet of England and the century,*" said Atterbury, the translator of "*Achitophel.*" This was the time when M. Huet, Bishop of Avranches, wrote to Salmasius, who had done the author of "Paradise Lost" the honor of refuting and abusing him:—"*How can you spend your time on so insignificant a thing as that Milton?*" Everything was reviving, all was falling into its proper place, once more. Dryden above, Shakspere below, Charles II. on the throne, Cromwell on the gibbet. England was rising from the shame and extravagances of the past.

It is a great happiness for nations to be led back by monarchy to good order in the state, and good taste in letters.

It is hard to believe that such benefits could have been misunderstood. Was it not abominable to turn one's back on Charles II. and to reward with ingratitude the magnanimity that he had shown in re-ascending the throne? Lord Linnæus Clancharlie had given this pain to honest people. To sulk at the happiness of one's country, what madness!

We know that in 1650 Parliament had decreed this form of declaration:—*I promise to remain faithful to the Republic, without king, without sovereign, without lord.*—Under pretext of having taken this monstrous oath, Lord Clancharlie was living out of the kingdom, and in the presence of the general felicity, thought he had the right to be sad. He had a melancholy esteem for that which was no more; a strange attachment to vanished things.

To excuse him was impossible; the most well-disposed abandoned him. His friends had long done him the honor to believe that he had entered the republican ranks only to observe the flaws in the republican armor the more closely, and to strike the more surely when the day should come, for the benefit of the sacred cause of the king. This waiting for the convenient hour for killing one's enemy

from behind, forms a part of loyalty. And this had been hoped for from Lord Clancharlie, so great was the inclination to judge him favorably. But, in the face of this strange republican persistence, they had been obliged to give up this good opinion. Evidently, Lord Clancharlie had his convictions, that is to say, he was an idiot.

The explanation given by the charitable, wavered between puerile stubbornness, and senile obstinacy.

The severe and the just, went further. They blighted the name of this renegade. Imbecility has rights, but it has limits. A man may be stupid, but he ought not to be a rebel. And then, what was Lord Clancharlie after all? A deserter. He had left his camp, the aristocracy, to go over to the other camp, the people. This faithful man was a traitor. It is true that he was a "traitor" to the stronger, and faithful to the weaker side; it is true that the camp repudiated by him, was the victorious camp, and that the camp adopted by him was the conquered camp; it is true that by this "treason," he lost everything, —his political privileges and his domestic hearth, his peerage and his country; he gained ridicule only; his sole profit was exile. But what does that prove? That he was a simpleton. Granted.

A traitor and a dupe at the same time; such things can be.

A man may be as great a simpleton as he likes, on condition that he does not set a bad example. It is only required of simpletons to be honest by means of which they may aim at being the basis of monarchies. The short-sightedness of this Clancharlie was incomprehensible. He had remained dazzled by the revolutionary phantasmagoria. He had allowed himself to be both taken in and put out by the republic. He affronted his country. His attitude was downright felony! To be absent, is to be insulting. He seemed to hold himself aloof from the public joy, as from the plague. In his voluntary banishment there was some strange refuge against the national satisfaction. He treated royalty like a contagion. Over the vast monarchical gladness denounced by him as a pest-house, he was the black flag. What! Make this gloomy face over re-constituted order, a raised nation, and restored religion! Throw that shadow on this serenity! Take offence at contented England! Be the dark spot in that great blue sky! Look like a threat! Protest against the nation's will! Refuse his "yes" to the universal assent! It would be odious if it were not comical. This Clancharlie had not made it clear to himself that one may go astray

with Cromwell, but one must come back with Monk. See Monk. He commands the army of the republic; Charles II. in exile, informed of his probity, writes to him; Monk, who can conciliate virtue with tricky measures, dissimulates at first, then, all at once, at the head of his troops, dissolves the factious Parliament, and re-establishes the King, and Monk is created Duke of Albemarle, has the honor of having saved society, becomes very rich, makes his epoch forever illustrious, and is made Knight of the Garter, with the prospect of burial at Westminster. Such is the glory of a faithful Englishman. Lord Clancharlie had never been able to rise to the comprehension of duty thus carried out. He had the infatuation and the immobility of exile. He contented himself with hollow phrases. This man was stiffened with pride. The words, conscience, dignity, etc.,—are but words after all. One must see through things.

Clancharlie had not seen quite through things. His was a shortsighted conscience, which, before doing anything, wanted to look at it close enough to get its odor. Hence arose absurd disgusts. One cannot be a statesman with such delicate perceptions. Excess of conscience degenerates into infirmity. Scrupulousness is one-armed when a sceptre is

to be seized, and a eunuch when fortune is to be wedded. Distrust scruples. They lead too far. Unreasonable fidelity leads down like a cellar staircase. One step, then another step, then still another, and you find yourself in the dark. The clever get up again, the simple-minded remain below. Conscience must not be too readily permitted to entangle itself in austerity. From transition to transition it will at length reach the dark shades of political prudery. Then one is lost. That was what had happened to Lord Clancharlie.

Principles end by becoming a pit.

He was now walking with his hands behind his back along the shores of Lake Geneva; a fine way of getting on!

They sometimes spoke of this absentee in London. In public opinion he was almost on trial. There were pleadings for and against him. When the case was heard all he won was a verdict in favor of his stupidity.

Many of the former zealots of the ex-republic had given in their adherence to the Stuarts. For which they should be praised. Naturally, they slandered him a little. The obstinate are troublesome to the compliant. Clever people in favor and well placed at court, and annoyed by his disagreeable attitude, were fond of saying:—"*If he has not rallied to the throne it is because he has not*

been sufficiently well paid," etc.—"*He wantea the chancellorship which the king has given to Lord Hyde,*" etc. One of his "old friends" even went so far as to whisper: "*He told me so himself.*" At times, however, solitary as Linnæus Clancharlie was, some of these remarks would reach him through the exiles whom he met, through old regicides like Andrew Broughton, who was living at Lausanne. Clancharlie confined himself to an imperceptible shrug of the shoulders, a sign of profound stupidity.

Once he completed this shrug by a few words murmured in a low tone: "*I pity those who believe that.*"

IV.

Charles II., good man, treated him with disdain. The happiness of England under Charles II. was more than happiness, it was enchantment. A restoration is an old picture blackened by age, that is being re-varnished; all the past re-appears. The good old manners returned, pretty women reigned and governed. Evelyn took note of this; we read in his diary: "Lewdness, profanation, contempt of God. I saw the king one Sunday evening with his mistresses, Portsmouth, Cleveland,

Mazarin, and two or three others, all nearly naked, in the gaming gallery." We feel a touch of ill-humor in this picture; but Evelyn was a growling Puritan, tainted with republican reveries. He did not appreciate the profitable example set by kings, by these grand Babylonian gaieties, which after all support luxury. He did not understand the utility of vice. Rule: Do not extirpate vice if you want to have charming women. Otherwise you will resemble those idiots who destroy caterpillars while they dote on butterflies.

Charles II., as we have just said, scarcely perceived that a rebel called Clancharlie existed, but James II. was more attentive. Charles II. governed gently, it was his way; and let us add that he governed none the worse for it. A seaman sometimes makes a loose knot in a rope intended to hold fast against the wind, which he then leaves to the wind to tighten. Such is the folly of the storm, and of the people. This loose knot soon converted into a tight knot, was the government of Charles II.

Under James II. strangulation began. A necessary strangulation of what remained of the revolution. James II. had the laudable ambition of being an efficient king. The reign of Charles II. was, in his eyes, a mere sketch of restoration; James II. wished a

more complete return to order. He had in 1660, deplored that the hanging of the regicides was limited to ten. He was a more genuine reconstructor of authority. He gave vigor to serious principles; he made that true justice reign which is superior to sentimental declamations, and is preoccupied above all things with the interests of society. In these protecting severities we recognize the father of the state. He intrusted the hand of justice to Jeffreys, and the sword, to Kirk. Kirk multiplied examples. This useful colonel one day had a man, a republican, hung, and taken down again, three times in succession, asking him each time: "Do you abjure the Republic?" The villain having said "no" each time was finally despatched. "*I hanged him four times,*" said Kirk, with satisfaction. The renewal of executions is a great sign of force, in the government. Lady Lyle who, though she had sent her son to fight against Monmouth, had hidden two rebels in her house, was put to death. Another rebel, having been honorable enough to declare that an Anabaptist woman had given him shelter, was pardoned and the woman was burned alive. Kirk, another day, gave a city to understand, that he knew it to be republican, by hanging nineteen of its citizens. Perfectly legitimate reprisals, assuredly, when one reflects that

under Cromwell, they cut off the ears and noses of the stone saints in the churches. James II., who had known how to select Jeffreys and Kirk, was a prince imbued with true religion, he mortified himself by the ugliness of his mistresses, he listened to Father la Colombiere, that preacher, who was almost as unctuous as Father Cheminais, but with more fire, and who had the glory of being, during the first half of his life, the counselor of James II., and during the second part, the inspirer of Mary Alacoque. It was, thanks to this strong religious nourishment, that James II. was enabled, later on, to endure exile with dignity, and to present, in his retirement at Saint-Germain, the spectacle of a monarch superior to adversity, calmly touching for "King's evil," and conversing with Jesuits.

One can understand that such a king should, in a certain measure, be preoccupied by a rebel like Lord Linnæus Clancharlie. Hereditarily transmissible peerages, having a certain quantity of future in them, it was evident that if any precaution with regard to this lord was to be taken, James II. would not hesitate.

II.

LORD DAVID DIRRY-MOIR

I.

Lord Linnæus Clancharlie had not always been old and proscribed. He had had his phase of youth and fashion. We know from Harrison and Pride, that Cromwell when young had loved women and pleasure, which sometimes, (another aspect of the feminine question) denotes a seditious person. Distrust the loosely adjusted girdle. *Male praecinctum juvenem cavete.*

Lord Clancharlie, like Cromwell, had had his weaknesses and irregularities. He was known to have a natural child, a son. This son, who came into the world just as the republic was going out, was born in England, while his father was going into exile. That is why he had never seen this father. This bastard of Lord Clancharlie had grown up as a page at the court of Charles II. He was called Lord David Dirry-Moir; he was lord by cour-

tesy, his mother being a woman of quality. This mother, while Lord Clancharlie was becoming an owl in Switzerland, made up her mind, being beautiful, to sulk less, and was forgiven for this first fierce lover by a second, who was incontestably tame, and even a Royalist, for it was the king. She was to some extent the mistress of Charles II., enough so, however, to make his majesty, who was charmed to have captured this pretty woman from the republic, give little Lord David, the son of his conquest, a commission as Keeper of the Stick. This made the bastard an officer, boarded at the king's expense, and, by a natural rebound of feeling, an ardent adherent of the Stuarts. Lord David was for some time, as Keeper of the Stick, one of the hundred and seventy who wore the broad sword; then he entered the corps of pensioners, and was one of the forty who bore the gilded halberd. He had, besides being of that noble body, instituted by Henry VIII. for guarding his person, the privilege of placing the dishes on the king's table. Thus it was, that while his father was growing gray in exile, Lord David prospered under Charles II.

After which he prospered under James II.

The king is dead, long live the king, is the *non deficit alter, aureas.*

It was on the accession of the Duke of

York, that he obtained permission to call himself Lord David Dirry-Moir, after an estate which his mother, who had just died, had bequeathed him in that great Scottish forest, where the bird, Krag, is found, which hollows out its nest in the trunk of oaks with its beak.

II.

James II. was a king, and affected to be a general. He liked to surround himself with young officers. He liked to show himself in public, on horseback, in helmet and cuirass, with a vast overflowing peruke streaming from beneath the helmet over the cuirass, a sort of equestrian statue of imbecile war. He took a fancy to the graces of young Lord David. He was gratified that this royalist was the son of a republican; a repudiated father does not hurt the beginning of a court fortune. The king made Lord David, Gentleman of the Bedchamber, at a salary of a thousand pounds.

This was a fine promotion. A gentleman of the bedchamber sleeps near the king every night on a bed which is set up for him. There are twelve gentlemen, and they relieve each other.

Lord David in this post, was chief of the king's granary, the one who supplies oats to

the horses, and has two hundred and sixty pounds salary. He had under him the king's five coachmen, the king's five postilions, the king's five grooms, the king's twelve footmen, and the four porters (of the king's chair). He had charge of the six race-horses, which the king keeps at Haymarket, and which cost his majesty six hundred pounds a year. He had full sway in the king's wardrobe, which furnishes the Knights of the Garter, with their robes of ceremony. He was saluted to the very ground by the usher of the Black Rod, who belongs to the king. This usher, under James II., was Chevalier Duppa. Lord David received the respect of Mr. Baker, who was Clerk of the Crown, and of Mr. Brown, who was Clerk of the Parliament. The Court of England, magnificent in everything, is a pattern of hospitality. Lord David, as one of the twelve, presided at banquets and receptions. He had the glory of standing up behind the king, on days of offering, when the king gives the church the golden byzantium; on collar-days, when the king wears the collar of his order; and on communion-days, when no one partakes of the communion, except the king and the princes. It was he, who, on Holy-Thursday (Maunday-Thursday), introduced into his majesty's presence, the twelve poor men, to whom the king gives as many

silver pence, as the years of his life, and as many shillings, as the years of his reign. It was his function, when the king was ill, to call, to his majesty's assistance, the two grooms of the almonry, who are priests, and to prevent the physicians from approaching without permission from the Council of State. Furthermore, he was Lieutenant-Colonel of the Scotch regiment of the Royal Guard, which plays the Scottish march.

In this capacity, he made several campaigns, and very gloriously, for he was a valiant soldier. He was a brave lord, well made, handsome, generous, very grand in look and manners. His person was like his quality. He was of lofty stature, as well as of lofty birth.

At one time he came very near being appointed Groom of the Stole, which would have given him the privilege of putting the king's shirt on his majesty; but for this office one must be either a prince or a peer.

To create a peer is a great affair. It is to create a peerage, and that causes jealousy. It is a favor; a favor gives the king one friend and a hundred enemies, without taking into account that the friend becomes ungrateful. James II. from policy, rarely created peerages, but he readily transferred them. A transferred peerage produces no sensation. It is simply

the continuation of a name. The other lords are but little disturbed by it.

The royal good will did not object to introduce Lord David Dirry-Moir into the Upper House, provided it was through the door of a substituted peerage. Nothing would have pleased his majesty better than to have an opportunity for transforming David Dirry-Moir from a lord by courtesy to a lord by right.

III.

This opportunity presented itself.

One day it was learned, that several things had happened to the old absentee, Lord Linnæus Clancharlie, the most important of which was, that he had died. Death has this much good in it for people, that it makes them talked about a little. People related what they knew, or what they thought they knew, about the last years of Lord Linnæus. Conjectures and fables, probably. If these doubtless very improbable tales could be believed, then, towards the end of his life, Lord Clancharlie must have experienced such a revival of republicanism, that it had led him, they affirmed, to marry, strange obstinacy of exile, the daughter of a regicide, Ann Bradshaw,—they stated the name,—who had also died, it

was said, but in giving birth to a child, a boy, who, if all these details were correct, would be the legitimate son, and the legal heir of Lord Clancharlie. These reports, which were very vague, were more like rumors, than fact. What took place in Switzerland was, for the England of that time, as far away, as that which takes place in China, is, for the England of to-day. Lord Clancharlie must have been fifty-nine years old at the time of his marriage, and sixty at the birth of his son, and must have died very shortly afterwards, leaving behind him this child, an orphan both on the father's and the mother's side. Possibilities, no doubt, but not probabilities. They added that the child was "beautiful as thé day," just as we read in all fairy tales. King James put an end to all these rumors, evidently without any foundation, by declaring Lord David Dirry-Moir, one fine morning, sole and positive heir of Lord Linnæus Clancharlie, his natural father, *in default of legitimate child*, and by the royal good pleasure, *the absence of all other filiation and descendants, being established;* of which the patents were registered in the House of Lords. By these patents, the king substituted Lord David Dirry-Moir to the titles, rights, and prerogatives of the said defunct Lord Linnæus Clancharlie, on the sole condition that Lord David should

wed, when she attained a marriageable age, a girl, at that time a mere infant and only a few months old, whom the king had made a duchess in her cradle, no one knew exactly why. Read, if you choose, that they knew only too well, why. This little one was called the Duchess Josiana.

The English fashion, then, ran to Spanish names. One of Charles II.'s bastards was called Carlos, Earl of Plymouth. It is probable that "*Josiana*" was a contraction of Josefa-y-Ana. However, perhaps there was the name of Josíana, just as there was that of Josias. One of the noblemen of Henry III. was named Josias du Passage.

It was to this little duchess that the king gave the peerage of Clancharlie. She was a peeress while waiting until there should be a peer. The peer would be her husband. This peerage rested upon a double castle-nard, the Barony of Clancharlie, and the Barony of Hunkerville; moreover, the Lords of Clancharlie were, in a word, for an ancient feat of arms, and by royal permission, Marquises of Corleone, in Sicily. The peers of England cannot bear foreign titles, though there are exceptions; thus, Henry Arundel, Baron Arundel of Wardour, was, as well as Lord Clifford, a count of the Holy Empire, of which Lord Cowper is a prince; the Duke of Hamilton is

Duke of Chatelherault in France; Basil Feilding, Earl of Denbigh, is Count of Hapsburg, Lauffenburg and Rheinfelden in Germany. The Duke of Marlborough was Prince of Mindelheim in Suabia, as the Duke of Wellington was Prince of Waterloo, in Belgium. This same Lord Wellington was a Spanish Duke of Ciudad-Rodrigo, and a Portuguese Count de Vimeira.

There were in England, and there are yet, noble and common estates. Lord Clancharlie's estates were all noble. These estates, castles, townships, bailiwicks, fiefs, rents, freeholds, and domains, attached to the Clancharlie-Hunkerville peerage, belonged provisionally, to Lady Josiana, and the king declared that once married to Josiana, Lord David Dirry-Moir, should be Baron Clancharlie.

Besides the Clancharlie inheritance, Lady Josiana had her personal fortune. She had great possessions, several of which were gifts from Madame *Sans Queue* to the Duke of York. Madame *Sans Queue* means Madame, simply. Henrietta of England, Duchess of Orleans, the first lady in France after the queen, was thus designated.

IV.

After having prospered under Charles and James, Lord David prospered under William. His Jacobite feelings did not go so far as to

follow James II. into exile. While continuing to love his legitimate king, he had the good sense to serve the usurper. He was moreover, although somewhat lacking in discipline, an excellent officer; he passed from the land to the sea-forces, and distinguished himself in the White Squadron. He there became what was then called, "Captain of a light frigate." All this ended by making him a very gallant man, carrying the elegance of vice to an extreme point, something of a poet, like everybody else, a good servant of the State; a good servant to the prince, assiduous at feasts, at galas, at levees, at ceremonies, at battles; servile, as was befitting, very haughty, short-sighted, or far-sighted, according to the object to be looked at, willing to be honest, obsequious and arrogant as occasion required, frank and sincere by impulse, but ready to resume his mask; later on, very observant of the royal good or bad humor, careless before a sword's point, always ready to risk his life at a sign from his Majesty, with heroism and platitude, capable of any insult but of no impoliteness, a man of courtesy and of etiquette, proud to be on his knees on great monarchical occasions, of a gay valor, a courtier on the surface, a knight below, and quite young at forty-five.

Lord David sang French songs, an elegant gaiety which had pleased Charles II.

He loved eloquence and fine language. He greatly admired those celebrated parades of claptrap which are called the Funeral Orations of Bossuet.

From his mother he had nearly enough to live on, about ten thousand pounds, sterling, income, that is two hundred and fifty thousand francs a year; he managed to get along with it,—by running into debt. In magnificence, extravagance and novelty, he was incomparable. As soon as anyone imitated him, he changed his fashion. On horseback he wore easy turned-over cowhide boots with spurs. He had hats such as no one else had, unheard-of lace, and neck-bands which were especially his own style.

III.

THE DUCHESS JOSIANA

I.

Towards 1705, although Lady Josiana was twenty-three, and Lord David forty-four, the marriage had not yet taken place, and that for the best reasons in the world. Did they hate each other? Far from it. But that which cannot escape you inspires no haste. Josiana wished to remain free; David wished to remain young. To be free from all ties as long as possible seemed to him a prolongation of youth. Middle-aged men who were determined to remain young abounded in these rakish days; they grew gray as young fops; wigs were accomplices later on, powder was an auxiliary. At fifty-five Lord Charles Gerrard, Baron Gerrard of the Gerrards of Bromley, filled London with the fame of his successes. The young and pretty Duchess of Buckingham, Countess of Coventry, was madly in love with the sixty-seven years old hand-

some Thomas Bellasyse, Viscount Falcomberg. People quoted the famous verses of the septuagenarian Corneille to a young woman of twenty: "Marquise, if my face." Women also had their autumnal successes, witness, Ninon and Marion. Such were the models.

Josiana and David carried on a flirtation of a particular shade. They did not love, they pleased each other. To be at each other's side sufficed. Why hasten the end of it? The novels of those days drove lovers and betrothed couples to this sort of probation period, which was then considered in the best taste. Josiana, moreover, knowing she was a bastard, felt herself a princess, and treated all arrangements with a high hand. She had a fancy for Lord David. Lord David was handsome, but this was over and above the bargain. She considered him elegant.

To be elegant, is everything. Caliban, elegant and magnificent, quite out-distances Ariel, poor. Lord David was handsome, so much the better; the hidden rock in beauty is being insipid; this he was not. He betted, boxed, ran in debt. Josiana thought much of his horses, his dogs, his losses at play, his mistresses. Lord David, on his side, was completely fascinated by the Duchess Josiana, that maiden without spot and without scruples, haughty, inaccessible, and bold. He

addressed sonnets to her which Josiana sometimes read. In these sonnets he affirmed that to possess Josiana would be to rise to the stars, which did not prevent him from postponing this ascension to the following year. He danced attendance at the door of Josiana's heart, and this suited them both. The supreme good taste of this delay was admired at court. Lady Josiana said: "It is provoking that I should be obliged to marry Lord David, I, who would ask for nothing better than to be in love with him!"

Josiana was "the flesh." Nothing could be more magnificent. She was very tall, too tall. Her hair was of that shade which could be called reddish blonde. She was plump, fresh, robust, rosy, with an inordinate amount of audacity and wit. Her eyes were only too intelligible. Lovers she had none; nor chastity, neither. She was walled round in pride. Men, oh, fie! a god at the least would be worthy of her; or a monster. If virtue consists in inaccessibility, Josiana possessed all possible virtue, without any innocence. She had had no intrigues, through disdain; but it would not have offended her to be supposed to have had some, provided that they were uncommon, and suitable to a person like herself. She cared little for her reputation, but much for her glory. To seem yielding, and to be

unattainable, that was the masterpiece. Josiana felt herself to be majesty and matter. Hers was a cumbersome beauty. She invaded rather than charmed. She walked upon hearts. She was earthly. She would have been as much astonished to be shown a soul in her bosom as to be shown wings on her back. She expatiated upon Locke. She was cultured. She was suspected of knowing Arabic.

To be "the flesh" and to be a woman, are two different things. Where a woman is vulnerable, on the side of pity, for instance, which so easily becomes love, Josiana was not vulnerable. Not that she was unfeeling. The ancient comparison of flesh to marble is absolutely false. The beauty of flesh, lies in not being marble; it is to palpitate, to tremble, to blush, to bleed; it is to have firmness without hardness; it is to be white without being cold; it is to have its quiverings and its infirmities; it is to be life—and marble is death. Flesh of a certain degree of beauty has almost the right to nudity; it covers itself with a dazzling lustre as with a veil; whoever had seen Josiana naked, would have perceived her outlines only through a luminous dilatation. She would willingly have shown herself to a satyr, or a eunuch. She had the mythological self-possession. To make her nudity a torment, to elude a Tantalus, would have

amused her. The king had made her a duchess, and Jupiter, a Nereid. A double irradiation, of which the strange brilliancy of this creature was composed. In admiring her, one felt one's self becoming a pagan and a lackey. Her origin was bastardy and the ocean. She seemed to emerge from the foam. The first sketch of her destiny had been a hap-hazard one, but in a royal setting. She had within her, something of the wave, of chance, of nobility, and of the storm. She was lettered and learned. No passion had ever approached her, and yet she had sounded them all. She had the distaste of realizations, and the taste for them as well. If she had stabbed herself, it would only have been like Lucretia, afterwards. All corruptions in the visionary state, were in this virgin. She was a possible Astarte in a real Diana. She was, by the insolence of lofty birth, provoking and unapproachable. Nevertheless, she might find it amusing to plan a fall for herself. She dwelt in a halo of glory, half wishing to come down from it and perhaps with a curiosity to fall from it. She was rather heavy for her cloud. It is pleasant to do wrong. Princely unconstraint gives the privilege of an experiment, and a ducal personage, is merely amusing herself, where a plebeian would be lost. Josiana was in everything—by birth, by beauty, by

irony, by brilliancy—almost a queen. She had had a moment of enthusiasm for Louis de Boufflers, who could break a horseshoe between his fingers. She regretted that Hercules was dead. She lived in some indefinable expectation of a lascivious and supreme ideal.

Morally, Josiana made one think of the line of the Epistle to the Pisons: *Desinit in piscem.*

"A lovely woman's body with Hydra form below."

Hers was a noble chest, a splendid bosom, harmoniously heaved by a royal heart, a bright animated look, a pure and haughty face, and, who knows? having beneath the water, in the half seen and misty transparency, an undulating, supernatural prolongation, dragon-like, perchance, and deformed. A superb virtue, ending in vice in the depths of dreams.

II.

With all this she was an affected prude.

It was the fashion.

Let us remember Elizabeth.

Elizabeth is a type which has prevailed in England for three centuries, the sixteenth, the seventeenth, the eighteenth. Elizabeth is more than an Englishwoman, she is an An-

glican. Hence, the profound respect of the Episcopal Church for that queen; a respect resented by the Catholic Church, which mixed it with a little excommunication. In the mouth of Sixtus Fifth, anathematizing Elizabeth, the malediction turns to a madrigal, *Un gran cervello di principessa*, [a great princely brain] said he. Mary Stuart, less occupied with the church question, and more occupied with the feminine question, had little respect for her sister Elizabeth, and wrote to her as queen to queen, and as a coquette to a prude: "Your aversion to marriage arises from your not wishing to lose the liberty of being made love to." Mary Stuart toyed with a fan; Elizabeth with an axe. An unequal match. Moreover, both were rivals in literature. Mary Stuart made French verses; Elizabeth translated Horace. Elizabeth, being ugly, decreed herself beautiful, loved quatrains and acrostics, had the keys of cities presented to her by Cupid, pursed up her lips in the Italian fashion, and rolled her eyes in the Spanish fashion, had three thousand gowns and dresses in her wardrobe, several of which were Minerva and Amphitrite costumes; made much of the Irish for the width of their shoulders, covered her farthingale with tinsel and spangles, adored roses, swore, cursed, stamped, pounded her

maids of honor with her fists, told Dudley to go to the devil, beat Chancellor Burleigh, who used to cry, the old fool, spat on Matthew, collared Hatton, boxed Essex on the ears, showed her thighs to Bassompierre, was a virgin.

What she did for Bassompierre the Queen of Sheba had done for Solomon. [*Regina Saba coram rege crura denudavit.—Schicklardus in Proœmio Tarich Jersici F. 65.*] Therefore, it was correct, Holy Scripture having created the precedent. What is Biblical may be Anglican. The Biblical precedent even goes so far as to make a child who is called Ebnehaquem, or Melilechet, which means, "*the Wise Man's son.*"

Why not these manners? Cynicism is as good as hypocrisy.

Nowadays, England, who has a Loyola called Wesley, casts down her eyes a little before this past. She is annoyed, but proud of it.

While such manners ruled, the taste for deformity existed, particularly among women, and singularly enough among the handsome ones. What is the use of being beautiful, if one has not a pet monster? What is the good of being a queen, if one is not called "thou," by a rocking Chinese mandarin? Mary Stuart showed "favors" to a parasite—Rizzio. Maria-Theresa, of Spain, had been "some-

what familiar" with a negro. Hence the *Black Abbess.* In the alcoves of the great century, a hump could be stylish; witness the Marechal of Luxembourg.

And before Luxembourg, Condé, "such a pretty little man."

The beauties themselves might, without detriment, be deformed. It was accepted Anne of Boleyn had one breast larger than the other, six fingers on one hand, and a projecting tooth. La Valliere was bandy-legged. This did not hinder Henry VIII. from being beside himself for the one, and Louis XIV. going wild for the other.

As to morals, there were the same deviations. There was hardly a woman of high rank who was not a teratological case. Agnes enclosed Melusina. They were women by day and ghouls by night. They went to the place where criminals were executed, to kiss the freshly severed heads upon the iron stakes. Margaret of Valois, the ancestress of affected prudes, wore the hearts of all her dead lovers, in padlocked tin boxes, sewed to the belt of her dress-waist.

In the eighteenth century the Duchess of Berry, daughter of the Regent, summed up all these creatures in one obscene and royal type.

Moreover, the fair dames knew Latin. This had been a feminine grace ever since the

sixteenth century. Jane Grey had carried elegance to the point of knowing Hebrew.

The Duchess Josiana Latinized. In addition, another bit of fine manners, she was a Catholic. In secret, however, and rather after the manner of her uncle, Charles II., than like her father, James II. James had lost his kingdom by his Catholicism, and Josiana did not care to risk her peerage. That is why, although a Catholic amongst her intimates and among over-refined men and women, she was outwardly a Protestant. For the common herd.

This manner of interpreting religion is agreeable; one enjoys all the privileges attached to the established Episcopal church, and later on, one dies, like Grotius, in the odor of Catholicism, with the glory of having Father Petau say a mass for you.

Although plump and healthy, Josiana was, let us insist upon this point, a perfect specimen of affectation.

At times, her sleepy and voluptuous way of drawling out the ends of her phrases, was like the stretching of a tigress' paws as she walks in the jungle.

The advantage of being an affected prude consists in unclassifying the human race. One no longer does it the honor of belonging to it.

Above all, the human race must be put at a distance, that is the important thing.

When one has not Olympus, one takes the Hotel de Rambouillet.

Juno resolves herself into Araminta. A non-admitted claim to divinity creates the affected fine lady. Not being able to have thunderbolts, one has impertinence. The temple shrivels into a boudoir. Not being able to be a goddess, one becomes an idol.

There is besides, in affectation, a certain pedantry which pleases women.

The coquette and the pedant are neighbors. Their closeness is visible in the conceited fop.

The subtle is derived from the sensual. Gluttony affects delicacy. A grimace of disgust is becoming to covetousness.

And then the weak side of woman feels itself protected by all that casuistry of gallantry which takes the place of scruples with affected prudes. It is circumvallation with a moat. Every affected prude puts on an air of repugnance. It protects.

She will consent, but she disdains—meantime.

Josiana's conscience was in a disquieting condition.

She felt such an inclination to immodesty that she was a disdainful prude. The recoils of pride, in the inverse direction from our

vices, lead us to contrary vices. The excess of effort to be chaste made her a prude. To be too much on the defensive indicates a secret desire for attack. She who is austere is not severe.

She shut herself up in the arrogant, exceptional circumstances of her rank and her birth, while premeditating perhaps, as we have already said, some abrupt sally.

It was at the dawn of the eighteenth century. England was making a rough draught of what France had been during the Regency. Walpole and Dubois are in touch. Marlborough was fighting against his ex-king, James II., to whom it is said, he had sold his sister. Churchill Bolingbroke was in his meridian, and Richelieu (the duke) in his dawn. Gallantry found a certain commingling of ranks convenient, and vices made a general level. Later on it was to be made by ideas.

Association with the rabble, an aristocratic prelude began, what the revolution was to complete. It was not far off from the time when Jélyotte openly sat in broad daylight on the Marquise d'Epinay's bed. It is true, for manners will re-echo, that the sixteenth century had seen Smeton's night-cap on Anne Boleyn's pillow.

If woman, signifies error, as I forget what Council has affirmed, never was woman more

of a woman than in those days. Covering her frailty with her charms, and her weakness by her omnipotence, never has she more imperiously gained her absolution. To make the forbidden fruit the permitted fruit, this was Eve's fall, but to make the permitted fruit the forbidden fruit, is her triumph. That is her climax. In the eighteenth century the wife drew the bolt upon her husband. She shuts herself up in Eden with Satan. Adam is outside.

III.

All Josiana's instincts inclined her to yield herself to gallantry rather than to give herself legally. To surrender one's self to gallantry implies a literary tone, recalls Menalcas and Amaryllis, and is almost a learned act.

Mademoiselle Scudéry, apart from the attraction of ugliness for ugliness, had no other motive in yielding to Pelisson.

The sovereign maiden, and the subject wife, such are the old English customs. Josiana was deferring the hour of this subjection as long as she could. That she would have to come to marriage with Lord David, since the royal pleasure demanded it, was a necessity, no doubt, but what a pity! Josiana both

accepted Lord David and kept him off. There was a tacit agreement between them neither to conclude nor to break off. They eluded each other. This style of making love, with one step forward, and two steps back, is expressed in the dances of the time, the minuet and the gavotte. To be married people, is not becoming to one's expression, it fades the ribbons that one wears, it makes one old. The nuptials; distressing solution, with floods of light. The handing over of a woman by a notary, what a platitude! The brutality of marriage creates definite situations, suppresses the will, kills choice, has a syntax like grammar, replaces inspiration by orthography, makes love a dictation, puts to rout all life's mystery, inflicts transparence upon its periodic and fateful functions, dispels the illusions of feminine draperies, gives diminishing rights both to those who exercise as well as to those who submit to them, disturbs, by turning the scale all on one side, the charming equilibrium of the robust sex, and the powerful sex, of force and beauty, and makes of one a master, and of the other a servant, whilst, outside of marriage, there is a slave and a queen. To make the marriage bed so prosy as to be decent, can anything more gross be conceived? That there should be no more impropriety at all in loving, how stupid!

Lord David was maturing. Forty years strike a marked hour. He did not perceive it. And, in fact, he still looked thirty. He found it more amusing to desire Josiana than to possess her. He possessed others; he had mistresses. Josiana, on her side, had dreams.

The dreams were worse.

The Duchess Josiana, had this peculiarity, less rare, however, than is supposed, that one of her eyes was blue and the other was black. Her eyes were made of love and hate, of happiness and wretchedness. Day and night were mingled in her look.

Her ambition was this: to show herself capable of the impossible.

One day she said to Swift:

"You people fancy that your scorn exists."

"You people," meant the human race.

She was a skin-deep Papist. Her Catholicism did not overstep the quantity necessary for elegance. It would be Puseyism at the present day. She wore heavy dresses of velvet, or satin, or watered silk, some of them fifteen or sixteen ells wide, and gold and silver embroideries, and about her waist many knots of pearls, alternating with knots of precious stones. She made extravagant use of gold braid. She sometimes wore a bachelor's galooned cloth jacket. She rode horseback on a man's saddle, notwithstanding that the

invention of side-saddles had been introduced into England in the fourteenth century by Anne, wife of Richard II. She washed her face, arms, shoulders and neck in rock-candy dissolved in white of egg, after the Castilian fashion. There came over her face, after anyone had talked cleverly in her presence, a reflective little smile of singular grace.

Beyond this, she was free from malice. She was rather good-natured than otherwise.

IV.

MAGISTER ELEGANTIARUM

Life was a bore to Josiana, that need scarcely be said.

Lord David Dirry-Moir occupied a leading position in the gay life of London. The nobility and gentry venerated him.

Let us record one triumph of Lord David's; he dared to wear his own hair. The reaction against the wig was beginning. Just as, in 1824, Eugene Deveria, was the first who dared to allow his beard to grow, in 1702 Price Devereux was the first to risk wearing his natural hair in public under the disguise of artful hair-dressing. To risk one's hair, was almost risking one's head. The indignation was universal; yet Price Devereux was Viscount Hereford, and peer of England.

He was insulted, and the fact is, that the thing was worth while. At the very height of the outcry, Lord David suddenly appeared, he too, with his own hair, and without his wig. Such things announce the end of social

conditions; Lord David was reviled even more than Viscount Hereford. He held his ground. Price Devereux had been the first, David Dirry-Moir was the second. It is sometimes more difficult to be the second than the first. It requires less genius, but more courage. The first, intoxicated by the innovation, may have ignored the danger; the second sees the abyss, and, leaps into it. David Dirry-Moir flung himself into the abyss of no longer wearing a wig. Later on, they were imitated; after these two revolutionists, other men had the audacity to wear their own hair, and powder came as an extenuating circumstance.

In order to settle this important point of history, in passing, let us say that the real priority in the war against wigs, belongs to a queen, Christina of Sweden, who wore men's clothes, and had shown herself as early as 1680 with her natural, very short chestnut hair, powdered and brushed straight up without any attempt at dressing. She had besides, says Misson, some sprigs of beard.

The Pope, on his side, had by his bull of March, 1694, somewhat discredited the wig, by taking it from the heads of bishops and priests, and by ordering clergymen to let their hair grow.

So Lord David did not wear a wig, and wore cowhide boots.

These great things, pointed him out for public admiration. There was not a club of which he was not the leader; not a boxing match where he was not desired as referee. The referee is the umpire.

He had drawn up the charters of several clubs in high life; he had established elegant resorts, one of which, *Lady Guinea,* still existed in Pall-Mall in 1772. *Lady Guinea* was a club where all the young lords swarmed. They gambled there. The lowest stake was a roll of fifty guineas, and there were never less than twenty thousand guineas on the table. Near each player, stood a little round table, on which to stand the cup of tea, and the gilt wooden bowl in which the rolls of guineas were placed. The players, like servants when they clean knives, wore leather sleeves, to protect their laces, leather breast protectors to save their ruffles, and on their heads, to shade their eyes, on account of the great glare of the lamps, and to keep their curls in order wide-brimmed straw hats covered with flowers. They were masked so that no one could see their excitement, especially at the game of "Fifteens." All wore their coats wrong side out, for luck.

Lord David belonged to the Beefsteak Club, to the Surly Club, and the Split-farthing Club, to the Cross Club, and the Scratch-penny Club,

to the Sealed Knot, a royalist club, and to the Martinus Scribblerus, founded by Swift, to take the place of the Rota, founded by Milton.

Although handsome, he belonged to the Ugly Club. This club was dedicated to deformity. The members there agreed to fight, not for a beautiful woman, but for an ugly man. The club room was ornamented with hideous portraits, Thersites, Triboulet, Duns, Hudibras, Scarron; on the chimney-piece was Æsop between two one-eyed men, Cocles and Camoëns; Cocles having lost his left eye, and Camoëns his right eye, each one was carved on his blind side; and these two eyeless profiles faced each other. The day, when the beautiful Madame Visart caught the small-pox, the Ugly Club toasted her. This club was still flourishing at the beginning of the nineteenth century; it had sent a diploma of honorary membership to Mirabeau.

Since the restoration of Charles II., the revolutionary clubs had been abolished. They had pulled down the tavern in the little street near Moorfields, where the Calf's-head Club met so called, because on the 30th of January, 1649, the day when the blood of Charles I. flowed on the scaffold, the members drank red wine from a calf's skull, to the health of Cromwell.

Monarchical clubs had succeeded to the republican clubs.

People amused themselves decently there.

There was the She Romps. They caught a woman in the street, any passer-by, of the middle class, as little old and as little ugly as possible; they pushed her into the club by force, and they made her walk on her hands, with her feet in the air, her face veiled by her overturned skirts. If she did not do it with a good grace, they lashed that which was not veiled a little with a riding whip. It was her own fault. The equerries of this sort of riding-school called themselves "the Jumpers."

There was the Heat-lightning Club, metaphorically the merry dance. There they had negroes and white women dance the *picantes*, and *timtirimbas* of Peru, notably the *Mozamala*, "bad girl," a dance, which has as its climax the dancing-girl's sitting down on a heap of bran, on which, upon rising she leaves the callipygians imprint. They gave themselves this verse of Lucretius as a spectacle:

Tunc Venus, in sylvis jungebat corpora amantum.

There was the Hell-fire Club, where they played at being impious. It was the tournament of sacrilege. Hell was put up at auction there to the most blasphemous.

There was the Butting Club, so called, because they butted at people with their heads.

They picked out some street porter, with a wide chest and a stupid face. They offered him, and at need they compelled him to accept, a pot of porter for allowing them to butt him four times in the chest. And thereupon they betted. Once, a great brute of a Welshman named Gogangerdd died at the third butt. This appeared serious. There was an inquest, and the jury of indictment rendered this verdict:—"Died of an expansion of the heart, caused by excessive drinking." Gogangerdd had, in fact, drunk the pot of porter.

There was the Fun Club. *Fun* is like *cant*, like *humor*, a specially untranslatable word. Fun is to farce what pepper is to salt. To enter a house, to smash a costly mirror, to slash the family portraits, to poison the dog, to put the cat in the aviary, this is called "cutting up a bit of fun." To spread a false piece of bad news, which made people put on mourning by mistake, is fun. It was fun that made a square hole in a Holbein at Hampton Court. Fun would have been proud if *it* had broken off the arms of the Venus of Milo. Under James II., a young millionaire lord, who had set fire by night to a thatched cottage, made London roar with laughter, and was proclaimed the *King of Fun*. The poor devils of the cottage, had escaped in their shirts. The members of the Fun Club,

all of the highest aristocracy, used to run about London, at the hour when the citizens were asleep, pulling the hinges from the shutters, cutting the pipes of pumps, staving-in cisterns, unhooking signs, pillaging kitchen-gardens, extinguishing lanterns, sawing the propping beams of houses, breaking window-panes, especially in the poor quarters of the town. It was the rich who did this to the poor. That is why no complaint was possible. Besides, it was all play. These manners have not entirely disappeared. In different parts of England, or the English possessions at Guernsey, for instance, your house is now and then damaged a little at night, your fence is broken down, your door-knocker is wrenched off, etc. If poor people did this, they would be sent to jail; but it is all done by pleasant young men.

The most distinguished of the clubs was presided over by an emperor, who wore a crescent on his forehead, and was called "The Great Mohawk." "The Mohawk" went beyond fun. To do harm for harm's sake—that was the programme. The Mohawk Club had this grandiose aim, to injure. In order to fulfil this function, all means were good. On becoming a Mohawk, a man took an oath to do harm. To do harm, at any price, no matter when, no matter to whom, and no matter how,

was the duty. Every member of the Mohawk Club was obliged to have a special talent. One was a "dancing master," that is to say, he made peasants frisk by pricking their calves with his sword. Others were skilled in making men "sweat," that is to say, in improvising a circle of six or eight gentlemen, rapier in hand, around some ragamuffin; when surrounded on all sides, it was impossible for him not to turn his back on some one; the gentleman to whom the man turned his back chastised him for it by a sword-thrust, which made him wheel around, a new sword-thrust in his back, warned the fellow that he had some nobleman behind him, and so on, each one pricking in his turn; when the man, enclosed in this circle of swords, and all covered with blood, had wheeled and danced enough, they had him cudgeled by lackeys, just to change the course of his ideas. Others "hit the lion," that is to say, they laughingly stopped a passer-by, smashed his nose with a fist-blow, and thrust both their thumbs into his eyes. If the eyes were gouged out, he was paid for them.

Such were, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, the pastimes of the wealthy idlers of London. The idlers of Paris, had different ones. M. de Charolais discharged his gun at a citizen, on his own threshold. Youth has amused itself, in all times.

Lord David Dirry-Moir brought his magnificent and liberal spirit into all these various institutions, for pleasure. Just like anyone else he would gaily burn down a thatched, wooden hut, and singe those who were in it, a little, but he rebuilt their house for them, of stone. It happened once that he made two women dance on their hands at the She Romps Club. One was unmarried, he gave her a dowry; the other was married, he had her husband appointed chaplain.

Cock-fighting owed him some praiseworthy improvements. It was a marvel to see Lord David dress a cock for the fight. Cocks seize each other by the feathers, as men by the hair. Therefore Lord David made his bird as bald as possible. With a pair of scissors he cut off all the feathers from the tail, and, from the head to the shoulders, all the feathers of the neck. "So much the less for the enemy's beak," he used to say. Then he spread out his cock's wings and cut each feather, one after the other to a point, and that made wings trimmed with darts. "That's for the enemy's eyes," he said. Then he scraped his claws with a penknife, sharpened his nails, fitted a sharp and cutting steel spur over his own main spur, spat on his head, spat on his neck, anointed him with saliva, as athletes used to be rubbed with oil, and then let him loose, fierce and furious,

exclaiming: "That's the way to make an eagle a cock, and the way to make the barnyard fowl a creature of the mountain!"

Lord David attended boxing-matches, and he was their living law. On great occasions it was he who had the stakes driven in, and the ropes stretched, and who fixed the number of yards that the ring should contain. If he acted as the second, he followed his boxer foot by foot, a bottle in one hand, a sponge in the other, shouting to him: "Strike fair!" suggested stratagems, advised him while fighting, sponged him while he was bleeding, raised him when he was knocked down, took him on his knees, put the neck of the bottle between his teeth, and from his own mouth filled with water, blew a fine spray into his eyes and ears, which reanimates the fainting man. If he was the umpire he presided over the fairness of the blows, prohibited everyone, whoever he might be, except the seconds from assisting the combatants, declared the champion beaten, who did not fairly face his adversary, watched that the time of the rounds did not go beyond half a minute, objected to butting, decided against whoever struck with his head, and prevented striking the man who was down. All this knowledge did not make a pedant of him, and took away nothing from his easy manner in society.

When he was referee of a boxing-match, none of the sunburnt, pimpled, and hairy backers of this one or that one, would have dared, in order to come to the aid of their weakening champion, and to overthrow the chances of the bets, to scale the fence, to enter the enclosure, to break the ropes, to tear up the stakes, and to violently interfere in the fight. Lord David belonged to the small number of umpires, whom they dared not thrash.

Nobody could train as he did. The boxer, whose trainer he consented to be, was sure to win. Lord David would choose a Hercules, massive as a rock, tall as a tower, and made him his child. The problem was, to make that human rock pass from the defensive to the offensive state. He excelled in this. The Cyclop once adopted, he never left him. He became his nurse. He measured out his wine, he weighed his meat, he counted his hours of sleep. It was he who invented that admirable regimen for athletes, since renewed by Morley: In the morning, a raw egg and a glass of sherry, at noon, a leg of mutton rare, and tea, at four o'clock, toast and tea, in the evening, pale ale and toast. After which, he undressed the man, rubbed him down, and put him to bed. In the street, he never lost sight of him, warding off all dangers—runaway horses, car-

riage-wheels, drunken soldiers, pretty girls. He watched over his virtue. This maternal solicitude continually brought some new perfection to the pupil's education. He taught him the fist-blow that smashes the teeth, and the thumb-blow which gouges out the eye. Nothing could be more touching.

In this way he prepared himself for political life to which he was to be called, later on. It is no slight matter to become an accomplished gentleman.

Lord David Dirry-Moir, was passionately fond of street-shows, mountebank theatres, of circuses of rare beasts, of acrobats' booths, of clowns, tumblers, merry-andrews, of open-air play, and all the wonders of a fair. The real lord is he who enjoys the common people; that is why Lord David frequented taverns, and the low haunts of London and the Cinque Ports. In order to be able at need, without compromising his rank in the White Squadron, to collar a top-man or a caulker, he used to wear a sailor's jacket when he went to the slums. For these transformations, it was convenient for him not to wear a wig, for, even in Louis XIV.'s time, the common people kept to their hair, as the lion to his mane. In this way he was free. The low people whom Lord David met in these crowds, and with whom he mingled, held him in high esteem, and did not

know that he was a lord. They called him Tom-Jim-Jack. He was popular under this name and quite famous among the rabble. He played the blackguard like a graduate in the art. When necessary, he used his fists. This side of his elegant life was known and highly appreciated by Lady Josiana.

V.

QUEEN ANNE

I.

Above this couple there was Anne, Queen of England.

A most commonplace woman, was Queen Anne. She was gay, kindly, august, or very nearly so. None of her qualities reached to virtue, none of her imperfections sank to vice. Her stoutness was bloated, her wit was heavy, her kindness was stupid. She was stubborn and weak. As a wife, she was faithless and faithful, having favorites to whom she yielded her heart, and a consort for whom she kept her bed. As a Christian, she was a heretic and a bigot. She had one beauty, the robust neck of a Niobe. The rest of her person had not turned out very well. She was awkwardly and yet decently coquettish. Her skin was white and fine, and she showed much of it. The fashion of a necklace of large pearls fitted close to the throat was introduced by

her. She had a narrow forehead, sensual lips, fleshy cheeks, and protruding short-sighted eyes. Her short-sightedness extended to her mind. With the exception of a burst of joviality now and then, which was almost as ponderous as her anger, she lived in a sort of taciturn growl, and surly silence. She dropped words whose meaning had to be guessed. She was a mixture of a good woman, and a spiteful devil. She loved the unexpected, which is a profoundly feminine trait. Anne was a roughly sketched pattern of the universal Eve. To this sketch there had fallen that cast of the die, the throne. She drank. Her husband was a thoroughbred Dane.

A Tory herself, she governed by the Whigs. Femininely, insanely. She had fits of rage. She broke things. No one could be more awkward in handling matters of state. She let events fall to the ground. Her whole system of policy was cracked. She excelled in making great catastrophes with petty causes. When a whim of authority seized her, she called it: Hitting with the poker.

She would say, with an air of profound reverie words such as these: "No peer can remain covered before the king, except Courcy, Baron Kinsale, Peer of Ireland." She would say: "It would be an injustice if my husband could not be Lord Admiral, since my father

was."—And she made George of Denmark High Admiral of England, "and of all her Majesty's Plantations." She was perpetually in a perspiration of ill-humor; she did not express her thought, she exuded it. There was something of a sphinx in that goose.

She did not hate fun, teasing and spiteful jokes. If she could have made Apollo a hunchback it would have delighted her. But she would have left him a god. Good-natured, her ideal was to drive no one to desperation, and to worry everyone. She often used coarse words, and, a little more, she would have sworn like Elizabeth. From time to time, she drew from a man's pocket, which she had in her petticoat, a small round box of hammered silver, on which there was her portrait in profile, between the two letters, Q. A. [Queen Anne], would open this box, and would take from it with the tip of her finger a little pomade with which she reddened her lips, then, having prepared her mouth, she laughed. She was very fond of the flat gingerbread cakes of Zealand. She was proud of being fat.

A Puritan more than anything else, she would however, gladly have turned to stage plays. She had a fancy to have an Academy of Music, copied after that of France. In

1700, a Frenchman named Forteroche wanted to build a "Royal Circus" in Paris, costing four hundred thousand livres (French money), to which Argenson was opposed. This Forteroche went over to England, and proposed it to Queen Anne, who was for a moment fascinated by the idea of building a theatre in London fitted up with machinery, which was to be finer than that of the King of France and having *four sub-basements for traps*, etc. Just as Louis XIV., she liked to have her coach driven at a gallop. Her teams and relays, sometimes made the trip from London to Windsor in less than an hour and a quarter.

II.

In the time of Anne, no meeting was allowed without the permission of two Justices of the Peace. The assembling of twelve persons, were it only to eat oysters and drink porter, constituted a felony.

Under this reign, which was nevertheless comparatively a mild one, the press-gang for the fleet was operated with extreme violence; a gloomy proof that the Englishman is a subject rather than a citizen. For centuries the King of England acted herein in a tyrannical way, which gave the lie to all the old charters

of freedom, and over which France in particular triumphed and grew indignant. That which diminishes this triumph a little, is, that while sailors were pressed in England, soldiers were pressed in France. In all the large towns of France every able-bodied man passing along the streets about his business was liable to be shoved into a house called an *oven* by the crimps. There they shut him up pell-mell with others, those who were fit for service were picked out, and the recruiters sold these passers-by to the officers. In 1695, there were thirty of these *ovens* in Paris.

The laws against Ireland, emanating from Queen Anne were atrocious.

Anne was born in 1664, two years before the Great Fire of London, upon which the astrologers — (there were some left, witness Louis XIV., who was born, assisted by an astrologer and swaddled in a horoscope) — had predicted that being "The elder sister of Fire," she would be queen. And so she was, thanks to astrology, and the Revolution of 1688. She was humiliated at having had only Gilbert, Archbishop of Canterbury, for her godfather. To be the god-daughter of the Pope was no longer possible in England. A mere primate is a mediocre godfather. Anne had to be content. It was her own fault. Why was she a Protestant?

Denmark had paid for her virginity, *virginitas empta*, as the old charters say, with a dowry of six thousand two hundred and fifty pounds sterling a year, raised on the bailiwick of Wardinbourg, and on the Island of Fehmarn.

Anne followed the traditions of William, from conviction and by routine. The English, under that royalty born of a revolution, had all the liberty which could be had between the Tower of London, into which they put orators, and a pillory into which they set writers. Anne spoke a little Danish for her "asides" with her husband, and a little French for her "asides" with Bolingbroke. Pure gibberish; but it was, especially at court, the height of English fashion to speak French. There was no witty saying but in French. Anne paid great attention to the coinage, especially copper coins, which are the low and popular ones; she wanted to cut a great figure on them. Six different farthings were struck during her reign. On the reverse of the first three she simply placed a throne; on the reverse of the fourth she wanted a triumphal chariot, and on the reverse of the sixth, a goddess, holding a sword in one hand, and an olive branch in the other, with the motto: *Bello et Pace* [War and Peace]. A daughter of James II., who was candid and cruel, she was brutal.

And at the same time, she was gentle at heart. A contradiction which is but apparent. A fit of anger metamorphosed her. Heat sugar and it will bubble.

Anne was popular. England likes feminine rulers. Why? France excludes them. That would be enough reason. Perhaps there is not even another. For English historians, Elizabeth represents grandeur, Anne, goodness. As they please. Let it be so. There is nothing delicate about these feminine reigns. The lines are heavy. It is gross grandeur, and gross goodness. As for their immaculate virtue, England sets store by it, and we are not going to oppose it. Elizabeth is a virgin, tempered by Essex, and Anne is a wife, complicated by Bolingbroke.

III.

One idiotic habit that nations have, is, to attribute what they do, to the king. They fight. Whose is the glory? The king's. They pay. Who is magnificent? The king. And the people love him for being so rich. The king receives a crown apiece from the poor and returns them a farthing. How generous he is! The pedestal, a colossus, contemplates the pigmy, its burden. "How

great Myrmidon is! He is on my back." A dwarf has an excellent means of being taller than a giant, it is to perch on his shoulders. That the giant should let him do it, is the singular part of it; and that he should then admire the dwarf's height, is the stupidity of it. Human simplicity!

The equestrian statue, reserved for kings alone, represents royalty very well; the horse, is the people. Only this horse slowly transforms himself. In the beginning, he is an ass, in the end, he is a lion. Then he throws his rider on the ground, and, we have 1642 in England, and 1789 in France; and sometimes he devours him, and then we have in England, 1649, and in France, 1793.

That the lion should become a donkey again, is astonishing, but it is a fact! This was the case in England. They had resumed the pack-saddle of royalist idolatry. Queen Anne, as we have just remarked, was popular. What was she doing for this? Nothing. Nothing! That is all that is asked of the sovereign of England. He receives for that *nothing*, thirty million francs a year. England, that had only thirteen war vessels under Elizabeth and thirty-six under James I., counted one hundred and fifty in 1705. The English had three armies, five thousand men in Catalonia, ten thousand in Portugal, fifty thousand in Flanders,

and besides were paying forty millions a year to monarchical and diplomatic Europe, a sort of public woman that the English people have always kept. Parliament having voted a patriotic loan of thirty-four million francs in annuities, there had been a throng at the Exchequer to subscribe to it. England sent a squadron to the East Indies, and a squadron to the coasts of Spain under Admiral Leake, without counting a reserve of four hundred sail, for an emergency, under Admiral Shovel. England had just amalgamated Scotland with herself. It was the time between Hochstaet and Ramillies, and one of these victories seemed to foreshadow the other. England, in drawing that net at Hochstaet, had taken twenty-seven battalions and four regiments of dragoons prisoners, and taken away one hundred leagues of territory from France, who retreated in dismay, from the Danube to the Rhine. England was stretching out her hand to Sardinia and the Balearic Isles. She was bringing back triumphantly into her ports, ten Spanish line-of-battle ships, and many a galleon freighted with gold. Hudson's Bay and Straits were already half given up by Louis XIV.; it could be seen that he was about to let go his hold on Acadia, Saint Christopher and Newfoundland, and that he would be but too happy if England would only tolerate the King of France

fishing for codfish off Cape Breton. England was about to inflict upon him the shame of having to raze, the fortifications of Dunkirk himself. Meanwhile, she had taken Gibraltar, and was taking Barcelona. What great things were accomplished! How was it possible not to admire Queen Anne, for taking the trouble to live during this period?

From a certain point of view, the reign of Anne appears like a reflection of the reign of Louis XIV. Anne, for a moment parallel with that monarch, in the meeting, which is called history, has a vague reflected resemblance to him. Like him, she plays at having a great reign; she has her monuments, her arts, her victories, her captains, her men of letters, her privy purse for pensioning fame, her gallery of masterpieces, just as his majesty had. Her court, too, forms in procession, and has a triumphal aspect, an order, and a march. It is a reproduction on a small scale of all the great men of Versailles, none too great, to begin with. There is enough in it to deceive the eye; add *God Save the Queen,* which might even then have been borrowed from Lully, and the whole thing makes up the illusion. Not one personage is missing. Christopher Wren is a very passable Mansard; Somers is as good as Lamoignon. Anne has a Racine,—Dryden; a

Boileau, Pope; a Colbert, Godolphin; a Louvois, Pembroke, and a Turenne, Marlborough. Only, you must heighten the wigs, and lower the foreheads. Altogether, it is solemn and pompous, and Windsor, at that moment, almost had a sham look of Marly. Still, everything is feminine, and Anne's Father Tellier, was called Sarah Jennings. Nevertheless, a dawning of irony, which fifty years later will become philosophy, is outlining itself in literature, and the Protestant Tartuffe is unmasked by Swift, just as the Catholic Tartuffe was denounced by Molière. Although, at this epoch, England quarrels with France and beats her, she imitates and derives light from her; and that which falls on the façade of England is French light. It is a pity that the reign of Anne lasted only twelve years, otherwise the English would not require much urging to say the century of Anne, as we say the century of Louis XIV. Anne appeared in 1702, when Louis XIV. was declining. It is one of the curiosities of history, that the rise of that pale star, coincides with the setting of the crimson star, and that at the very time when France had King Sun, England should have had Queen Moon.

A point to be noted. Louis XIV., although they were at war with him, was much admired in England. "He is the king that

France needs," said the English. The love of the English for their liberty, is mixed up with a certain acceptance of the servitude of others. This kindliness for the chains which bind their neighbors, sometimes goes as far as enthusiasm for the despot next door.

To sum up, Anne rendered her people *hureux*, as the French translator of Beeverell's book says three times and with a gracious persistence, on pages 6 and 9 of his dedication, and page 3 of his preface.

IV.

Queen Anne had a slight grudge against the Duchess Josiana for two reasons.

Firstly, because she found the Duchess Josiana pretty.

Secondly, because she found the betrothed of Duchess Josiana fine looking.

Two reasons for being jealous are sufficient for a woman; a single one is sufficient for a queen.

Let us add this: She bore her a grudge for being her sister.

Anne did not like women to be pretty. She found that contrary to good morals.

As for herself, she was ugly.

Not from choice, however.

A part of her religion came from this ugliness.

Josiana, beautiful and philosophical, annoyed the queen.

For an ugly queen, a pretty duchess is not an agreeable sister.

There was another grievance, the *improper* birth of Josiana.

Anne was the daughter of Anne Hyde, a simple lady, legitimately, but unfortunately, married by James II., when he was Duke of York. Anne, having some of this inferior blood in her veins, felt herself only half royal, and Josiana, having come into the world quite irregularly, emphasized the incorrectness, — which was quite real, though less in itself—of the queen's birth. The daughter of the misalliance saw, without any pleasure, the daughter of bastardy not very far from herself. There was an unpleasant resemblance here. Josiana had the right to say to Anne: "My mother was as good as yours." At court, no one said it, but evidently it was thought. This was unpleasant for the royal majesty. Why this Josiana? What put it into her head to be born? What was the good of a Josiana? Certain relationships are belittling.

Nevertheless, Anne looked pleasantly on Josiana.

Perhaps she would have loved her if she had not been her sister.

VI.

BARKILPHEDRO

It is useful to know the actions of persons, and some supervision is wise.

Josiana had Lord David watched a little by one of her men, in whom she had confidence, and whose name was Barkilphedro.

Lord David had Josiana discreetly observed by one of his men, of whom he was sure, and whose name was Barkilphedro.

Queen Anne, on her side, had herself secretly informed of the actions and conduct of the Duchess Josiana, her bastard sister, and of Lord David, her future brother-in-law, on the left hand, by one of her men, on whom she fully relied, and whose name was Barkilphedro.

This Barkilphedro had this keyboard under his hand: Josiana, Lord David, the Queen. A man between two women. What modulations were possible! What an amalgamation of souls!

Barkilphedro had not always held this magnificent position of whispering into three ears.

He was an old servant of the Duke of York.

He had tried to be a clergyman, but had failed. The Duke of York, an English and a Roman prince, compounded of royal popery and legal Anglicanism, had his Catholic house and his Protestant house, and might have promoted Barkilphedro in one or the other hierarchy, but he did not consider him sufficiently Catholic, to make him an almoner, and not sufficiently Protestant to make him a chaplain. So that Barkilphedro found himself with his soul on the ground, between two religions.

This is not a bad position for certain reptile souls.

Certain roads are practicable only by crawling flat on the ground.

An obscure, but nutritious domestic service was for a long time Barkilphedro's whole existence. Service, is something, but he wanted power, besides. He was, perhaps, about to reach it when James II. fell. All had to be begun over again. There was nothing to be done under William III., a sullen prince, and having a prudery in his manner of reigning which he believed to be, probity. Barkilphedro, when his protector James was dethroned, was not at once in rags. A certain something that survives fallen princes, feeds and sustains their parasites for awhile. The remainder of exhaustible sap lets the leaves live on two or three days, at the ends of the limbs of an

uprooted tree; then, all at once, the leaf grows yellow and dries up, and so does the courtier.

Thanks to that embalming, called legitimacy, the prince himself, although fallen and cast away, persists and is preserved; it is not thus with the courtier, who is far more dead than the king. The king, yonder, is a mummy, the courtier, here, is a phantom. To be the shadow of a shadow, that is an extreme case of leanness. Hence, Barkilphedro became famished. Then he assumed the condition of a man of letters.

But he was driven out of the very kitchens. Sometimes, he did not know where to sleep. "Who will save me from this open air hostelry?" he used to say. And he struggled. All that is interesting in patience in distress, he possessed. He had, besides, the talent of the white ant, which knows how to bore a hole from the bottom upwards. By making use of the name of James II., of old memories, of fidelity, of sensibility, etc., he bored his way up to the Duchess Josiana.

Josiana took a liking to this man who was both wretched and witty, two things which affect one. She introduced him to Lord Dirry-Moir, gave him lodgings in her retainers' quarters, considered him a part of her household, was kind to him, and sometimes even spoke to him. Barkilphedro was no

longer either hungry or cold. Josiana addressed him, with "thee's" and "thou's." It was the fashion for great ladies to speak so to men of letters, who permitted it. The Marquise de Mailly received Roy, whom she had never seen before, while in bed, and said to him: "Was it thou who wrote 'L'Annee Galante!' Good-morning." Later, men of letters returned the "thou." A day came, when Fabre d'Eglantine said to the Duchess of Rohan:

"Art thou not la Chabot?"

For Barkilphedro to be thee'd and thou'd was a success. He was enchanted by it. He had aspired to this condescending familiarity.

"Lady Josiana says 'thee' and 'thou' to me!" he said to himself. And he would rub his hands.

He took advantage of this theeing and thouing to gain ground. He became a sort of familiar of Josiana's private apartments, in no way troublesome, quite unperceived; the duchess would almost have changed her chemise before him. All this, however, was precarious. Barkilphedro was aiming at a position. A duchess is a half-way point. A subterranean gallery which did not reach to the queen, would have been labor lost.

One day Barkilphedro said to Josiana:

"Would your Grace like to make my happiness?"

"What dost thou want?" asked Josiana.

"An appointment."

"An appointment! For thee?"

"Yes, madam."

"What an idea, for thee to ask for an appointment. Thou art good for nothing."

"That is the very reason."

Josiana began to laugh.

"Among the functions for which thou art not fit, which one dost thou desire?"

"That of Cork-drawer of the Bottles of the Ocean."

Josiana's laugh grew louder.

"What is that? Thou art fooling."

"No, madam."

"I am going to amuse myself by answering thee seriously," said the duchess. "What dost thou want to be? Repeat."

"Cork-drawer of the Bottles of the Ocean."

"Everything is possible. Is there such an office as that?"

"Yes, madam."

"Teach me something new. Go on."

"There is such an office."

"Swear it to me, on the soul, which thou hast not."

"I swear it."

"I do not believe thee."

"Thanks, madam."

"So thou wouldst like? . . . Begin again."

"To unseal the bottles of the sea."

"That is an office which ought not to make one very tired. Why, it is like currycombing the bronze horse."

"Very nearly."

"Nothing to do. That is, indeed, the place thou needest. Thou art good for that."

"You see that I am fit for something."

"Come, thou art making fun. Is there such a place?"

Barkilphedro took the attitude of deferential gravity.

"Madam, you have an august father, James II., king, and an illustrious brother-in-law, George of Denmark, Duke of Cumberland. Your father has been and your brother-in-law is Lord Admiral of England."

"Are these the novelties that thou com'st to teach me? I know that as well as thou."

"But here is what your Grace does not know. In the sea there are three kinds of things: those that are at the bottom of the water, *Ligan;* those that float on the water, *Flotsam*, and those that the water throws up on the land, *Jetsam.*"

"What then?"

"These three things, *Ligan*, *Flotsam* and *Jetsam*, belong to the Lord High Admiral."

"And what next?"

"Your Grace understands?"

"No."

"All that is in the sea, whatever sinks, whatever floats, and whatever is stranded, belongs to the Admiral of England."

"Everything. Very well. What then?"

"Except the sturgeon, which belongs to the king."

"I should have thought," said Josiana, "that all that belonged to Neptune."

"Neptune is a fool. He has given up everything. He has let the English take everything."

"Finish your speech."

"Sea-prizes; that is the name given to those found things."

"'Tis well."

"They are inexhaustible. There is always something floating, something coming ashore. It is the sea's contribution. The sea pays England a tribute."

"I have no objections. But come to an end."

"Your Grace understands that in this way the ocean creates a department."

"Where?"

"At the Admiralty."

"What department?"

"The sea-prize department."

"Well?"

"The department is subdivided into three offices: *Ligan, Flotsam, Jetsam;* and there is an officer for each."

"What then?"

"A vessel on the high seas wishes to send some message ashore—that it is sailing in such and such a latitude, that it has met a sea-monster, that it is in sight of some shore, that it is in distress, that it is about to founder, that it is lost, et cetera; the skipper takes a bottle, puts a piece of paper on which he has written the matter in it, seals it up and throws the bottle into the sea. If the bottle goes to the bottom, it concerns the *Ligan* officer; if it floats, it concerns the *Flotsam* officer; if it is borne to land by the waves, that concerns the *Jetsam* officer."

"And thou wouldst like to be the *Jetsam* officer?"

"Precisely."

"And that is what thou callest being Cork-drawer of the Bottles of the Ocean?"

"Since there is such an office."

"Why dost thou wish this last place instead of the other two?"

"Because it is vacant just now."

"What are the duties of the office?"

"Madam, in 1598, a tarred bottle found by a conger-eel fisherman on the sandy strand of

Epidium Promontorium, was brought to Queen Elizabeth, and a parchment which was drawn from that bottle gave information to England, that Holland had, without saying anything about it, taken possession of an unknown country, *Nova Zembla;* that this appropriation had taken place in June, 1596; that in this country people were eaten by bears; and that the manner of passing the winter there was described on a paper, enclosed in a musket case, hanging in the chimney of a wooden house, built on the island, and left by the Dutch, who were all dead; and that this chimney was made of a barrel, with its ends knocked out, fitted in the roof."

"I understand very little of thy rigmarole."

"It may be. Elizabeth understood. One country more for Holland, was one country less for England. The bottle that had given the information was considered a very important matter. And from that day, the order was issued that whoever should find a sealed bottle on the sea-shore should take it to the Admiral of England, under penalty of the gallows. The Admiral commissions an officer to open those bottles, who informs his majesty of the contents, if there be reason for so doing."

"Do many such bottles reach the Admiralty?"

"Very few. But that makes no difference. The office exists. There is a room and lodgings at the Admiralty for the official."

"And how much is paid for this manner of doing nothing?"

"One hundred guineas a year."

"And thou wouldst trouble me for that?"

"It is enough to live on."

"In a beggarly way."

"As is befitting those of my sort."

"One hundred guineas, why it is a mere puff."

"What supports you for a minute, supports such as we are for a year. That is the advantage of the poor."

"Thou shalt have the place."

A week later, thanks to Josiana's good will, thanks to the influence of Lord David Dirry-Moir, Barkilphedro, — safe thenceforward, rescued from his precarious condition, now setting foot on solid ground—was installed at the Admiralty, with lodging, free of expense, and a yearly salary of one hundred guineas.

VII.

BARKILPHEDRO BORES HIS WAY

Primarily, there is one thing that must be done without delay: be ungrateful.

Barkilphedro did not fail herein.

Having received so many benefits from Josiana, he naturally had but one thought, to take revenge for them.

Let us add, that Josiana was beautiful, tall, young, rich, powerful, illustrious, and that Barkilphedro was ugly, short, old, poor, dependent and obscure. He certainly had to take revenge for that as well.

When a man is made of nothing but night, how can he forgive so many rays of light?

Barkilphedro was an Irishman who had renounced Ireland; a bad kind.

Barkilphedro had but one thing in his favor; and this was a very big belly.

A big belly passes for a sign of kindness. But this belly was an addition to Barkilphedro's hypocrisy. For this man was very wicked.

What was Barkilphedro's age? Any. The

age necessary for the project of the moment. He was old, by his wrinkles, and his gray hair, and young, by the agility of his mind. He was active and ponderous, a sort of monkey-hippopotamus. A Royalist, certainly; a Republican, who knows? A Catholic, perhaps; a Protestant, beyond a doubt. For the Stuarts, probably; for Brunswick, evidently. To be *For*, is a power only on condition of being *Against*, at the same time; Barkilphedro practised this wisdom.

The office of "Cork-drawer of the Bottles of the Ocean" was not so laughable as Barkilphedro had seemed to make it. The complaints which to-day would be called insults, made by Garcia-Ferrandez in his *Ocean Chart*, against the spoliation of stranded vessels, called "*Right of Wreck*," and against the pillage of wrecks by the inhabitants of the coasts, had made a sensation in England, and had brought about this improvement for the shipwrecked, that their goods, effects, and property, instead of being stolen by the peasants, were confiscated by the Lord Admiral.

All the rubbish of the sea, thrown on the English shore, merchandise, broken hulls of ships, bales, cases, etc., belong to the Lord Admiral; but—and here the importance of the position solicited by Barkilphedro became

apparent—the floating receptacles containing the messages and information, particularly attracted the attention of the Admiralty. Shipwrecks are one of England's serious pre-occupations. Navigation being her life, shipwreck is her care. England has the perpetual anxiety of the sea. The little glass vial, which a doomed ship throws to the waves, contains final information, which is precious from every point of view. Information as to the ship, information as to the crew, information as to the time, the place, the manner of shipwreck, information as to the winds which have destroyed the vessel, information as to the currents which have borne the floating flask ashore. The post that Barkilphedro occupied was abolished more than a century ago, but it had a real utility. The last incumbent was William Hussey, of Doddington, in Lincolnshire. The man who held this office was a sort of reporter of the affairs of the sea. All the closed and sealed up vases, bottles, vials, jars, etc., thrown upon the English coast by the tide were delivered to him; he alone had the right to open them; he was the first in the secret of their contents; he classified and labelled them in his registry; the expression, "*to lodge a basket at the registry*," still used in the Channel Islands, has this derivation.

It is true, one precaution had been taken. None of these receptacles could be unsealed and uncorked, except in presence of two sworn officials of the Admiralty, bound to secrecy, who, conjointly with the incumbent of the Jetsam office, signed the official report of the opening. But these officials being bound to silence, the result was that Barkilphedro had a certain discretionary latitude; up to a certain point, it depended upon him to suppress a fact, or to bring it to light.

These frail waifs were far from being, as Barkilphedro had told Josiana, rare and insignificant. Sometimes they reached land quickly enough; sometimes, after many years. That depended on the winds and the currents. This fashion, of bottles cast upon the waters, is somewhat out of date, like that of votive offerings; but in those religious days, those who were about to die liked to send their last thought to God and to men in this way, and, at times, these missives from the sea were plentiful at the Admiralty. A parchment, kept at the Castle of Audlyene (old orthography), and annotated by the Earl of Suffolk, Grand Treasurer of England under James I., states that, in the year 1615 alone, fifty-two gourds, bladders, and tarred vessels making mention of ships on the

point of being lost, were brought to, and registered in, the office of the Lord Admiral.

Court appointments are like drops of oil, they go on spreading. It is thus that the porter has become the Chancellor, and the groom, the Lord High Constable. The special officer, intrusted with the function desired and obtained by Barkilphedro, was usually a confidential person. Elizabeth had willed it so. At court, whoever says confidence, says intrigue; and whoever says intrigue, says growth. This functionary had come to be somewhat of a personage. He was a clerk, and ranked immediately after the two grooms of the Almonry. He had the right of entrance to the palace, but, let us say, only that which was called the "humble entrance," *humilis introïtus*, and even entrance to the bed-chamber. For it was the custom that he should inform the royal person, when the occasion was worthy the trouble, of his godsends, which were often very curious; wills of despairing men, farewells wafted to one's native land, revelations of barratry and crimes at sea, legacies to the crown, etc., and that he should keep his registry office in communication with the court, and from time to time render an account to Her Majesty of this unsealing of fateful bottles. It was the *camera obscura* of the ocean.

Elizabeth, who was fond of speaking Latin, used to ask Tamfeld of Coley, in Berkshire, the Jetsam officer of her time, when he brought her one of these old papers cast up by the sea, "*Quid mihi scribit Neptunus?*" "What does Neptune write to me?"

The boring was made. The white ant had succeeded. Barkilphedro was approaching the Queen.

This was all he wanted.

To make his fortune?

No.

To unmake that of others?

A greater happiness.

To injure, is to enjoy.

To have within one's self a vague, but implacable, desire to injure, and never to lose sight of it, is not everyone's gift. Barkilphedro had this fixity of intention.

His thought had the tenacity of a bull-dog's jaw.

To feel himself inexorable, gave him a fund of gloomy satisfaction. Provided he had a prey in his jaws, or a certainty of accomplishing evil in his soul, he wanted nothing more.

He shivered content, in the hope that some one else was cold.

To be malignant is a sort of opulence. A certain man, whom we think poor, and who, in fact, is so, has all his wealth in malice and

prefers it so. All lies in the satisfaction which one has. To play a bad trick, which is the same thing as doing a good turn, is more than money. Bad, for him who endures it, good, for the one who does it. Catesby, the accomplice of Guy Fawkes, in the Gunpowder Plot said: "To see Parliament blown up with its four hoofs in the air, I would not give that up for a million sterling."

What was this Barkilphedro? All that is most petty and all that is most terrible. An envious man.

Envy is a thing which one can always invest at court.

The court abounds in impertinent people, in idlers, in rich do-nothings, famishing for gossip, in seekers of needles in haystacks, in dealers in trifles, in bemocked-mockers, in witty blockheads who need the conversation of an envious man.

What a refreshing thing the evil is, which is told you about others!

Envy is good material for the making of a spy.

There is a profound analogy between this natural passion, envy, and that social function, espionage. The spy hunts for another's account, like the dog; the envious man hunts for his own account, like a cat.

A ferocious *me* makes up the whole envious man.

Barkilphedro had other qualities, he was secret, discreet, concrete. He kept everything, and burrowed in himself with his hatred. An enormous baseness, implies enormous vanity. He was liked by those whom he amused, and hated by the others; but he felt himself scorned by those who hated him, and despised by those who liked him. He restrained himself. All his insults simmered silently in his hostile resignation. He was indignant, as if rascals had that right. He was silently a prey to the Furies. Swallowing everything, was his talent. He had dumb inward wraths, frenzies of subterranean rage, black and brooding flames, which no one perceived; he was a smoke-consuming, choleric man. The surface smiled. He was obliging, assiduous, easy, amiable, civil. No matter who, and no matter where, he bowed. He bent to the very ground for a breath of wind. What a source of fortune, to have a reed in one's spinal column!

These hidden and venomous creatures are not so rare as is thought. We live surrounded by ominous crawlings. Why are there evil-doers? Poignant question. The dreamer incessantly puts it to himself, and the thinker never resolves it. Hence, the sad eye of philosophers, which is forever fixed on that mountain of obscurity, Destiny, and from

whose top the colossal spectre of evil drops handfuls of serpents upon earth.

Barkilphedro had an obese body, and a thin face. A fat trunk, and a bony visage. He had short, furrowed finger-nails, knotty fingers, flat thumbs, coarse hair, a great distance between his temples, and a murderer's forehead, broad and low. His half-closed eye hid the meanness of his look under his bushy eyebrows. His long, pointed, humped and flabby nose almost rested on his mouth. Barkilphedro, suitably dressed as an emperor, would have somewhat resembled Domitian. His face, of a rancid yellow, seemed to be modelled of a sticky paste; his immovable cheeks seemed to be made of putty; he had all sorts of ugly, refractory wrinkles; the angle of his jaw was massive, his chin heavy, his ear vulgar. In repose, seen in profile, his upper lip rising at a sharp angle, showed two teeth. These teeth seemed to look at you. Teeth can look, just as well as the eye can bite.

Patience, moderation, continence, reserve, circumspection, amenity, deference, gentleness, politeness, sobriety, chastity, completed and rounded off Barkilphedro. He calumniated these virtues by having them.

In a short time, Barkilphedro gained a footing at court.

VIII.

INFERI

There are two ways of gaining a footing at court: in the clouds, then you are august; in the mud, then you are powerful.

In the first case, you belong to Olympus. In the second case, you belong to the private closet.

He who belongs to Olympus, has only the thunderbolt; he who belongs to the private closet, has the police.

The private closet contains all the instruments of government, and at times, for it is treacherous too, of punishment. Heliogabalus goes there to die. Then it is called the Latrines.

It is, usually, less tragic. There, Alberoni admired Vendôme. Royal personages willingly make the private closet a place for audiences. It does duty as a throne. Louis XIV. receives the Duchess of Burgundy there; Philip V. is there, elbow to elbow with the Queen. The priest penetrates there. It is sometimes a branch of the confessional.

That is why there are underground fortunes at court. Nor are these the least.

If you wish to be great under Louis XI., be Pierre de Rohan, Marshal of France; if you wish to be influential, be Olivier le Daim, the barber. If you wish to be glorious under Marie de Medicis, be Sillery the Chancellor; if you wish to be of importance, be La Hannon, the ladies' maid. If you wish to be illustrious under Louis XV., be Choiseul, the minister; if you wish to be formidable, be Lebel, the valet. Let us take Louis XIV.: Bontemps, who makes his bed, is more powerful than Louvois, who makes up his armies, and Turenne, who makes his conquests. Take Father Joseph from Richelieu, and you leave Richelieu almost a void. All his mystery has departed. The scarlet Eminence is superb, the gray Eminence is terrible. To be a worm, what a power! All the Narvaez joined to all the O'Donnells do less work than one Sister Patrocinio.

But, of course, the conditions of this power rest on being small. If you wish to remain strong, remain insignificant. Be nothing at all. The serpent in repose, coiled in a circle, represents the infinite and zero at the same time.

One of these viper-like fortunes had fallen to Barkilphedro.

He had crawled where he wished to be.

Crawling beasts enter everywhere. Louis XIV. had bed-bugs in his bed, and Jesuits in his politics.

There is no incompatibility herein.

In this world everything is pendulum-like. To gravitate is to oscillate. One pole must have the other. Francis I. must have Triboulet; Louis XV. must have Lebel. A deep affinity exists between this extreme height and this extreme abasement.

It is the abasement which directs. Nothing is easier to understand. Whoever is underneath, holds the strings.

There is no more convenient position.

He is the eye, and he has the ear.

He is the eye of the government.

He has the king's ear.

To have the king's ear, is to draw and push the bolt of the royal conscience at one's will, and to stuff whatever one pleases in that conscience. The king's mind is your cupboard. If you are a rag-picker, it is your shoulder-basket. The ear of kings does not belong to kings; that is why, on the whole, those poor devils are so slightly responsible. He who does not own his thought, does not own his action. A king obeys.

What?

Any evil soul who buzzes into his ear from the outside. Dark fly of the abyss.

This buzzing commands. A reign is a dictation.

The loud voice is the sovereign; the low voice is the sovereignty.

Those who know how to distinguish the low voice, and hear what it prompts to the loud voice, during a reign, are the true historians.

IX.

HATE IS AS STRONG AS LOVE

Queen Anne had several of these low voices about her. Barkilphedro was one of them.

Besides the Queen, he worked upon, influenced, and secretly played upon, Lady Josiana and Lord David. As we have said, he whispered into three ears. One ear more than Dangeau. Dangeau whispered into two ears only, at the time, when, slipping his head between Louis XIV., who was smitten with Henrietta, his sister-in-law, and Henrietta, smitten with Louis XIV., her brother-in-law, was Louis' secretary, unknown to Henrietta, and Henrietta's, unknown to Louis; placed thus in the very midst of the love of the two puppets, he wrote both the questions and the replies.

Barkilphedro was so smiling, so ready to accept things, so incapable of undertaking the defence of any one whatever, so little devoted at heart, so ugly, so malicious, that it was quite natural that a royal personage should come to be unable to do without him.

Once Anne had tasted Barkilphedro, she wanted no other flatterer. He flattered her, as they flattered Louis the Great, by stinging others. "The king being ignorant," says Madame de Montchevreuil, "one is obliged to scoff at the learned."

To poison the sting from time to time, is the climax of art. Nero likes to see Locusta at work.

Royal palaces are very penetrable; these madrepores have an inner passage way, which is easily guessed at, worked, searched, and, at need, cleared out by that rodent, called the courtier. A pretext for entrance, is sufficient. Barkilphedro having this pretext, his office, in a very short time became to the Queen what he was for the Duchess Josiana, the indispensable domestic animal. A clever thing which he ventured to say one day made him fully understand the Queen's feelings at once; he knew how much to depend on Her Majesty's goodness. The Queen was very fond of her Lord Steward, William Cavendish, Duke of Devonshire, who was very stupid. This lord, who had all the Oxford degrees, and did not know how to spell, committed the folly of dying one morning. It is a very imprudent thing to die at court, for nobody any longer uses any restraint in talking about you. The Queen, Barkilphedro being present, was

lamenting the event, and ended by exclaiming with a sigh: "It is a pity that so many virtues should have been borne and served by so poor an intellect."

"May God have mercy on His Ass!" murmured Barkilphedro in a low tone, and in French.

The Queen smiled. Barkilphedro made a note of that smile.

He drew this conclusion: "Biting pleases."

His spite was now licensed.

From that day, he thrust his curiosity everywhere, his spite too. He was allowed to do it, he was so much feared. He who makes the king laugh, makes the rest tremble.

He was a powerful wag.

Every day he worked his way forward, underground. Barkilphedro became a necessity. Several great persons honored him with their confidence, so far, as to intrust him, on occasions, with some disreputable commission.

The court is a set of wheels. Barkilphedro became a motor there. Have you ever noticed the small size of the motor-wheel in certain mechanisms?

Josiana in particular, who, as we have indicated, utilized Barkilphedro's talents as a spy, had so much confidence in him that she had not hesitated to give him one of the secret keys of her apartments, by means of which he could

enter them at any hour. This excessive laying open of one's private life was the style in the seventeenth century. It was called: "giving the key." Josiana had given two of these confidential keys; Lord David had one, Barkilphedro had the other.

Moreover, to enter abruptly into bedrooms, was not by any means a surprising thing in the olden customs. Hence arose incidents. La Ferté, on suddenly drawing aside the curtains of Mademoiselle Lafont's bed, found Sainson, the black musketeer, there, etc., etc.

Barkilphedro excelled in making those sly discoveries which subordinate and bring the great under the power of the low. His tread in the dark was tortuous, soft and clever. Like every perfect spy, he was compounded of the sternness of an executioner, and the patience of a microscopist. He was a born courtier. Every courtier is a noctambulist. The courtier prowls in that night which is called omnipotence. He has a dark lantern in his hand. He lights up the point he needs, and remains in darkness himself. What he seeks with that lantern is not a man; it is a beast. What he finds, is the king.

Kings do not like to have people around them make pretensions to be great. Irony against any one but themselves, charms

them. Barkilphedro's talent consisted in a perpetual belittling of the lords and princes, to the advantage of the royal majesty, which was proportionately exalted thereby.

The private key which Barkilphedro had, was made with two sets of wards, one at each end, so that it could open the private apartments in Josiana's two favorite residences, Hunkerville House, in London, Corleone Lodge, at Windsor. These two mansions were a part of the Clancharlie inheritance. Hunkerville house adjoined Oldgate. Oldgate, in London, was a gate through which one came from Harwich, and where there was a statue of Charles II. with a painted angel on his head, and a carved lion and unicorn under his feet. From Hunkerville House, with an easterly wind, the chimes of St. Marylebone could be heard. Corleone Lodge was a Florentine palace of brick and stone, with a marble colonnade, built on piles, at the end of the wooden bridge, at Windsor, and having one of the most splendid court-yards in England.

In this latter palace, close to Windsor Castle, Josiana was within reach of the Queen. Nevertheless, Josiana enjoyed being there.

Almost nothing outwardly, but all well rooted, such was Barkilphedro's influence over the Queen. Nothing is more difficult to

uproot than these court weeds; they strike very deep, and offer no external hold. It is almost impossible to use the hoe on Roquelaure, Triboulet, or Brummel.

From day to day, and more and more, Queen Anne took Barkilphedro into her favor.

Sarah Jennings is famous; Barkilphedro is unknown; his favor remained obscure. This name, Barkilphedro, has not reached as far as history. Not all the moles are caught by the mole-catcher.

Barkilphedro, formerly a candidate for holy orders, had studied a little of everything; everything skimmed over, gives, as its result, —nothing. One may be the victim of the *omnis res scibilis*. It is the misfortune of a whole race of learned men, who may be called the sterile, to have the Danaïdes' cask under their cranium. What Barkilphedro had put in his head, had left it empty.

Mind, like nature, abhors a vacuum. Nature puts love in the vacuum; the mind often puts hate there. Hate occupies space.

Hate, for hatred's sake, exists. Art, for art's sake, exists in nature, more than is supposed.

We hate. We must do something.

Gratuitous hate, dreadful word. That means hate, which is sufficient reward unto itself.

The bear lives by sucking his paws.

Not indefinitely. That paw has to be

freshly provisioned. Something must be put under it.

To hate indistinctly, is sweet, and suffices for a time; but one must end by having an object. Animosity diffused over all creation exhausts, like every solitary pleasure. Hatred, without an object, is like shooting without a target. What makes the sport interesting is having a heart to pierce.

One cannot hate simply for the honor of it. There must be some seasoning, a man, a woman, some one to destroy.

This favor of making the sport interesting, of offering an aim, of throwing passion into hate by concentrating it, of amusing the hunter by the sight of the living prey, of making the watcher hope for the warm and smoking bubbling of the blood that is about to flow, of rejoicing the fowler, by the uselessly winged credulity of the lark, of being a creature, unknowingly hatched for murder, by a mind,—this exquisite and horrible favor, of which the person rendering it is unconscious, Josiana rendered Barkilphedro.

Thought is a projectile. From the first day, Barkilphedro had begun to aim the evil intentions which were on his mind, at Josiana. An intention and a carbine are alike. Barkilphedro aimed at her, directing all his secret malice against the Duchess. Does that

astonish you? What has the bird, at which you fire, done to you? It is done to eat it, you say. Barkilphedro said so too.

Josiana could hardly be struck in the heart. The spot where there is an enigma is hard to wound; but she could be struck in her head, that is to say, in her pride.

It was there that she thought herself strong, and that she was weak.

Barkilphedro was aware of it.

If Josiana had been able to see clearly into Barkilphedro's depth, if she had been able to distinguish what there was in ambush behind that smile, this proud and loftily placed person would probably have trembled. Happily, for the tranquility of her slumbers, she was absolutely ignorant of what was in this man.

The unexpected spreads, one knows not whence. The profound depths of life are dangerous. There is no little hatred. Hatred is always enormous. It preserves its stature in the smallest being, and remains a monster. Any hatred is all hatred. An elephant, hated by an ant, is in danger.

Even before striking her, Barkilphedro enjoyed a beginning of the savor of the bad deed which he wished to commit. He did not as yet know what he would do to Josiana. But he was decided to do something. To

have made up his mind to this, was already a great deal.

To annihilate Josiana would have been too great a success. He did not hope for it. But to humiliate her, to lessen her, to afflict her, to redden those superb eyes with tears of rage, that would be success. He counted on it. Tenacious, diligent, faithful in tormenting others, not to be torn from his purpose, nature had not made him thus for nothing. He was determined to find the flaw in Josiana's golden armor, and to make the blood of this Olympian creature flow. What advantage, we ask again, was there in this for him? An enormous advantage. Doing harm to the one who has done good to us.

What is an envious man? An ungrateful one. He detests the light which shines upon and warms him. Zoïlus hates that boon,—Homer.

To make Josiana undergo what would be called a vivisection to-day, to have her all convulsed, on his anatomical table, to dissect her, alive, at leisure, in some sort of surgical operation, to snip her to pieces, as an amateur, while she howled, this dream charmed Barkilphedro.

If, in order to arrive at this result, he had had to suffer a little, he would have found it right. We may nip ourselves with our own

pincers. The knife, in closing, cuts your fingers; what does it matter? He would not have minded being slightly caught in Josiana's torture himself. The executioner, handling the red-hot iron, has his share in the burning, and does not heed it. Because the other one suffers more, you feel nothing. To see the victim writhe, takes away your pain.

Do harm, come what may.

Arranging harm for others, is mingled with an acceptance of unknown responsibility. We risk ourselves, in the danger to which we are exposing others, because the sequence of events can bring about such unexpected collapses. This does not stop the genuine evil-doer. He experiences what the victim undergoes in agony, in the form of joy. He has the titillation of the others' laceration; the wicked man expands by horrors only. The torture reacts on him, as comfort. The Duke of Alva warmed his hands at the stake. The burning pile was pain; its reflection, pleasure. That such transpositions should be possible, makes one shudder. Our tenebrous side is unfathomable. "Exquisite torture," the expression is in Bodin (Book IV., page 196), having perhaps this terrible triple sense: Malicious refinement in the selection of the torture, suffering of the tortured, delight of the torturer. Ambition,

appetite, all these words signify some one sacrificed to some one satisfied. It is a sad thing that hope should be perverse. To bear a grudge to a creature, is to wish him ill. Why not good? Can it be that the principal trend of our will is towards evil? One of the severest tasks of the just man, is to continually eradicate an almost inexhaustible malevolence from his soul. Almost all our covetings, when examined, contain something we dare not avow. For the thoroughly wicked, and this hideous perfection exists, "so much the worse for others, means, so much the better for me." Shadow of man. Caverns.

Josiana had that fulness of security, which is given by ignorant pride, made of contempt for everything. The feminine faculty for disdain is extraordinary. An unconscious, involuntary and confiding contempt,—such was Josiana. Barkilphedro was hardly more than a thing to her. She would have been much astonished if she had been told that Barkilphedro really existed.

She came, and went, and laughed, before this man, who observed her obliquely.

He, full of thought, was watching his opportunity.

The longer he waited, the more his determination to throw some despair into this woman's life, increased.

An inexorable lying in ambush.

Besides, he gave himself excellent reasons. It must not be thought that scoundrels do not respect themselves. They enter into details with themselves in lofty monologues, and they treat matters in a very dignified way. What! This Josiana had bestowed alms on him! She had crumbled a few farthings of her colossal wealth upon him, as on a beggar! She had riveted and nailed him to an absurd position! If he, Barkilphedro, almost a clergyman, of varied and profound ability, a learned personage, with the material for a Reverend in him, if he were employed in registering potsherds, good for scraping Job's boils, if he passed his life in the garret of a registry office, seriously uncorking stupid bottles, incrusted with all the filth of the sea, and deciphering mouldy parchments, rotten scrawls, and dirty wills, and all sorts of illegible rubbish, it was the fault of this Josiana! What? and that creature *thee'd* and *thou'd* him!

And he was not to avenge himself!

And he was not to punish this sort of person!

Ah, indeed! Is there to be no more justice here below!

X.

FLASHES WHICH WOULD BE SEEN, IF MAN WERE TRANSPARENT

What! this woman, this extravagant creature, this lascivious dreamer, this virgin until opportunity should offer, this piece of flesh that had not yet surrendered, this brazenness with a princely coronet, this Diana by pride, not yet taken by the first comer; so be it; perhaps; they say so; I agree; for lack of chance; this bastard of a scoundrelly king, who had not wit enough to keep his situation; this Duchess, by a lucky hit, who, being a fine lady, plays at being goddess, and who, if poor, would have been a prostitute; this sham lady, this robber of a proscribed man's possessions, this haughty beggar, because, one day, he, Barkilphedro, had nothing to dine on, and being without shelter, she had the impudence to seat him at a corner of the table in her house, and to poke him in some hole of her intolerable palace, where? Never mind where, perhaps in the garret, perhaps in the cellar, what difference does that make? A

little better than her lackeys, a little worse than her horses! She had taken advantage of his distress, his, Barkilphedro's, to hurry and do him a favor treacherously, a thing the rich do in order to humiliate the poor, and to tie them to themselves, like beagles led by a leash! Besides, what did this favor cost her? A favor is worth what it costs. She had more than enough rooms in her house. To come to Barkilphedro's aid! great effort she had made there! Had she eaten one spoonful of turtle soup the less for it? Had she deprived herself of anything in the hateful overflow of her superfluities? No. She had added another vanity to this superfluity, an article of luxury, a good action as a ring to her finger; relieving a clever man, patronizing a clergyman! She could put on airs, and say: "I lavish benefits, I feed men of letters, I am his benefactress! How lucky the wretch was to have found me! What a friend of the arts I am!" All this for having set up a cot in a miserable hole under the rafters! As for the place in the Admiralty, Barkilphedro got it through Josiana. Egad! A pretty place! Josiana had made Barkilphedro what he was. She had created him. Granted. Yes, created nothing. Less than nothing. For, in this ridiculous office, he felt himself weighed down, cramped, and deformed. What did he owe

Josiana? The gratitude that a hunchback owes to his mother, who has made him deformed. That's just like your privileged ones, your people overwhelmed with fortune, your upstarts, your favorites of that hideous stepmother, Fortune! And a talented man, and a Barkilphedro is obliged to stand in line on the staircases, to bow to lackeys, to climb up a lot of stories at night, and to be courteous, assiduous, gracious, deferential, agreeable, and always to wear a respectful grimace on his muzzle! If that is not enough to make one gnash with rage! And all this time she was putting pearls around her neck, and posing as the beloved one with that fool of a Lord David Dirry-Moir, the hussy!

Never allow any one to do you a favor. They will take advantage of it. Never allow yourself to be caught in the act of starving, they would relieve you. Because he had no bread, this woman had found the pretext sufficient to give him something to eat! Henceforth he was her servant! A faintness of the stomach, and there you are, chained for life! To be under obligations, is to be exploited. The fortunate, the powerful, make use of the moment when you stretch out your hand, to put a penny in it, and of the minute, when you are weak, to make you a slave, and

a slave of the worst sort, the slave of a charitable action, a slave, forced to love! What infamy! What a want of delicacy! What a sudden assault on our pride! Then, all is over, then you are condemned for life to think this man good, to find that woman handsome, to remain in the background as an inferior, to approve, to applaud, to admire, to burn incense, to prostrate yourself, to make your knee-pans callous by kneeling, to sugar your words when you are consumed with rage, when you are swallowing shrieks of fury, and when you have more savage turbulence and more bitter foam within you, than the ocean.

It is thus that the rich make the poor prisoners.

This birdlime of a good action committed on you, bedaubs and bemires you forever.

Accepted alms are irremediable. Gratitude is paralysis. A benefit has a sticky and repugnant adherence, which takes away your free movements. The odious, opulent and over-fed beings, whose pity has thus maltreated you, know this. It is settled. You are their chattel. They have bought you. For how much? For a bone, which they have taken from their dog to offer to you. They have flung that bone at your head. You have been stoned, as much as succored. It is

all the same. Have you gnawed the bone? Yes, or no? You have had your share in the kennel, as well. Then give thanks. Give thanks forever. Adore your masters. Indefinite genuflections. The benefit implies an understood inferiority, accepted by you. They require that you should feel yourself a poor devil, and feel them to be gods. Your diminution increases them. Your bending down straightens them up. There is a gently impertinent accent in the tone of their voice. Their family events, marriages, baptisms, their child-bearings, their litters, all that concerns you. A little wolf-cub is born to them; very well, you must compose a sonnet. You are a poet, in order to grovel. As if that were not enough to make the very stars fall! A little more, and they would make you wear out their old shoes.

"What have you got there, my dear? How ugly he is! What is that man?" "I do not know, he is a scribbler, whom I feed." Thus these turkey-hens gabble. Without even lowering their voices. You hear, and you remain mechanically amiable. Yet, if you are ill, your masters send you a doctor. Not their own. Occasionally they make inquiries. Not being of the same species as you, and the inaccessibility being on their side, they are affable. The steepness of their height makes

them approachable. They know that a level is impossible. They are polite from sheer contempt. At table, they give you a little nod. Sometimes they know how to spell your name. They do not make you feel that they are your patrons in any other way, than by simply walking over all that is sensitive and delicate in you. They treat you with kindness!

Is this not abominable enough?

It was certainly urgent that Josiana should be chastised. She must be taught with whom she had to deal! Ah! my rich gentlemen, because you cannot eat up everything, because opulence would end in indigestion, on account of the smallness of your stomachs, which are no bigger than ours, after all, because it is better to distribute the leavings than to lose them, you exalt this morsel flung to the poor into an act of magnificence! Ah! you give us bread, you give us shelter, you give us clothes, you give us an office, and you drive your audacity, folly, cruelty, stupidity, and absurdity, to the extent of believing that we are much obliged to you! That bread is the bread of servitude, that shelter is a footman's bedroom, those clothes are a livery, that office is a mockery, paid for, it is true, but demoralizing! Ah! you think that you have the right to dishonor us with food and

lodging, you imagine that we are indebted to you, and you count upon gratitude! Well! We will rip out your entrails, my fine lady, we will eat you alive, and cut your heart-strings with our teeth!

That Josiana! Was it not monstrous? What merit had she? She had performed the masterpiece of coming into the world as a testimony of her father's stupidity and her mother's shame, she did us the favor to exist, and for the kindness that she had shown in consenting to be a public scandal, she was paid millions, she had lands and castles, warrens, preserves, lakes, forests, and I know not what all besides! And with all that, she was making a fool of herself! and verses were addressed to her! while he, Barkilphedro, who had studied and worked, who had taken pains, who had stuffed big books into his eyes and brain, who had grown mouldy in old folios and in knowledge, who was enormously clever, who could very well command armies, who could write tragedies like Otway and Dryden, if he wanted to, he who was made to be an emperor, had been reduced to permit this thing of naught to prevent him from dying of hunger! Could the usurpation of the rich, these execrable elect ones of fate, go further! To pretend to be generous with us, and protect us, and smile at us, we who could drink

their blood and lick our lips after it! What iniquity could be more frightful, than that this base court woman should have the odious power of being a benefactor, and that the superior man should be condemned to pick up such scraps, falling from such a hand! And what sort of society is that, which has such disproportion and injustice for its basis! Would it not be best to take everything by the four corners, and to throw the table-cloth to the ceiling pell-mell with the feast, and the orgy and the intoxication and the drunkenness, and the guests, and those who are resting their two elbows on the table, and those who are on all fours beneath it, and the insolent who give, and the idiots who accept, and spit all back at the face of God, and throw the whole earth at heaven! Meantime, let us drive our claws into Josiana.

So meditated Barkilphedro. Those were the roarings which he had in his soul. It is the habit of the envious, to absolve themselves by amalgamating public evils with their personal grievances. All savage forms of hateful passions came and went in that ferocious intelligence. In the corner of old fifteenth century maps of the world, there may be found a large, vague, formless and nameless space, where these three words are written: *Hic sunt leones.* This dark corner is in man

also. Passions prowl and growl somewhere within us, and we can also say of one dark side of our soul: "There are lions here."

Was this scaffolding of savage reasoning absolutely absurd? Did it lack a certain amount of judgment? It must be confessed, that it did not.

It is frightful to think that the thing which we have within us—judgment, is not justice. Judgment is the relative. Justice is the absolute. Reflect on the difference between a judge and a just man.

Evil-doers maltreat conscience with authority. There are gymnastics of untruth. A sophist is a forger, and, at times, this forger brutalizes common sense. A certain, very supple, very implacable and very agile logic, is at the service of evil, and excels in wounding truth in the dark. Spiteful blows struck by Satan at God.

Certain sophists, admired by simpletons, have no other glory but that of having knocked "black and blue spots" on the human conscience.

The worst of it was that Barkilphedro had a presentiment of miscarriage. He was undertaking a vast work, and on the whole, so at least, he feared, for very little havoc. To be a corrosive man, to have within one's self a will of steel, an adamant hatred, an ardent curiosity

for the catastrophe, and to burn nothing, to decapitate nothing, to exterminate nothing! To be what he was, a devastating power, a voracious animosity, a gnawer of the happiness of others; to have been created—(for there is a creator, the devil or God, no matter which!)—to have been created a complete Barkilphedro at every point, and to realize no more perhaps, than a fillip of the finger; could this be possible? Would Barkilphedro fail? To be a spring powerful enough to hurl masses of rock, and to let go the full force of one's trigger, only to raise a bump on an affected woman's forehead! A catapult, doing no more harm than a finger-snap! To accomplish a Sisyphus task for an ant's result! to sweat all hate, for almost nothing! Is this not humiliating, when one is a mechanism of hostility, capable of grinding the world to powder! To put all one's wheelwork in motion, to make, under cover of darkness, as much noise as Marly's great hydraulic machine and merely succeed, perhaps, in pinching the tip of a little rosy finger! Was he going to turn and over-turn great boulders, for the sake, who knows, of just ruffling the smooth surface of the court a little! God has this way of expending power lavishly. The moving of a mountain results in displacing a mole-hill.

Besides, the court being the given place, a queer ground, nothing is more dangerous than to aim at your enemy and miss him. In the first place, this unmasks you to your enemy, and irritates him; in the next, and above all, it displeases the master. Kings have little relish for unskilful people. No contusions; no ugly punchings. Cut everybody's throat, but do not make any one's nose bleed. He who kills, is skilful, he who wounds, is clumsy. Kings do not like to have their servants maimed. They are displeased if you crack a bit of porcelain on their chimney-piece, or a courtier in their train. The court must remain clean. Break, and replace; that is all right.

This perfectly agrees, moreover, with the taste which princes have for slander. Speak evil, do none. Or, if you do, let it be on a great scale.

Stab, but do not scratch. Unless the pin be poisoned. This would be an extenuating circumstance. This, let it be remembered, was Barkilphedro's case.

Every malicious pigmy is the vial in which Solomon's dragon is enclosed. A microscopic vial, an immense dragon. A formidable condensation awaiting the hour of gigantic dilatation. A weary waiting consoled by the premeditation of explosion. The contents

greater than the container. A latent giant, how strange a thing! An acarus in which there is a hydra! To be this frightful magic-box, to have Leviathan within one, is both a torture and a delight for a dwarf.

Nor would anything have made Barkilphedro lose his grip. He awaited his hour. Would it come? What matter? He awaited it. When one is very bad, self-love plays a part. To make holes and to sap a court fortune higher than our own, to undermine it at one's own risk and peril, however subterranean and hidden one may be, is, we lay stress on it, interesting. One becomes impassioned at such a game. One comes to falling in love with it, as with an epic poem that one would be composing. To be very small and to attack some one who is very great, is a brilliant action. It is a fine thing to be a lion's flea.

The proud beast feels himself stung, and expends his enormous rage against the atom. An encounter with a tiger would trouble him less. And here the actors' parts are changed. The humiliated lion has the insect's sting in his flesh, and the flea can say, "I have lion's blood in me."

However, these things were but half appeasing to Barkilphedro's pride. Consolations. Palliatives, at most. To tease is one thing, to

torture would do better. Barkilphedro had a disagreeable thought, which recurred to him continually, to the effect that he would probably have no further success than that of scratching Josiana's epidermis. What more could he hope for, he, so inferior, against her, so radiant? A scratch is but little to him who would like all the crimson of flaying alive, and the shrieks of the more than naked woman, who no longer has even *that* chemise, her skin! With such cravings, how sad it is to be impotent! Alas! Nothing is perfect.

In short, he tried to be resigned. Not being able to do better, he dreamed but half his dream. To play a dark trick, is an object after all.

He who takes revenge for a benefit conferred,—what a man! Barkilphedro was this colossus. Ordinarily, ingratitude is forgetfulness; with this monopolist of wickedness, it was fury. The every-day ingrate is full of ashes. With what was Barkilphedro filled? With a furnace. A furnace walled in by hate, rage, silence, rancor, awaiting Josiana for fuel. Never had a man abhorred a woman to such a degree without any reason. What an awful thing! She was his insomnia, his preoccupation, his grief, his rage.

Perhaps he was a little in love with her.

XI.

BARKILPHEDRO IN AMBUSH

To find Josiana's sensitive spot, and strike her there; this was Barkilphedro's imperturbable will, for all the causes which we have just stated.

To wish is not enough; one must be able to do the thing.

How was he to set about it?

That was the question.

Vulgar scamps carefully set the stage for any rascality they intend to commit. They do not feel themselves strong enough to seize the incident on the wing, to take possession of it by will or by force, and to constrain it to serve them. Hence, these preliminary combinations which deep scoundrels disdain. These deep scoundrels have their wickedness alone, as their *a priori;* they confine themselves to being completely armed, prepare several expedients for varied cases and, like Barkilphedro, simply watch their opportunity. They know that a plan shaped in advance,

runs the risk of dovetailing badly in the event that will present itself. Possibilities cannot be mastered so easily, nor can we do as we please with them. There is no preliminary parleying with destiny. To-morrow does not obey us. There is a certain lack of discipline in chance.

So they lie in wait for it, to demand its collaboration without preamble, authoritatively, and on the spot. No plan, no diagram, no model, no ready-made shoe fitting the unexpected, badly. They plunge headlong into blackness. The immediate and rapid advantage taken of any fact which can aid him, constitutes the skilfulness which distinguishes the efficient scoundrel, and which raises the rascal to the dignity of the demon. To assault fate unexpectedly, is genius.

The real villain strikes you like a sling, with the first pebble at hand.

Clever malefactors count upon the unforeseen, that stupefied accomplice of so many crimes.

To grasp the incident and fall upon it; there is no other "Art of Poetry" for this kind of talent.

And meanwhile know with whom one has to deal. And probe the ground.

For Barkilphedro, the ground was Queen Anne.

Barkilphedro approached the Queen.

So near, that sometimes he imagined he heard Her Majesty's monologues.

Sometimes he was present, unheeded, at conversations between the two sisters. He was not forbidden to slip in a word. He took advantage of this to lessen himself. One way of inspiring confidence.

Thus, one day in the garden at Hampton Court, being behind the Duchess, who was behind the Queen, he heard Anne, ponderously conforming to the fashion, express some sententious phrases.

"Animals are happy," said the Queen, "they run no risk of going to hell."

"They are there," replied Josiana.

This answer, which abruptly substituted philosophy for religion, displeased. If by chance it was deep, Anne felt shocked by it.

"My dear," said she to Josiana, "we are talking of hell like two silly things. Let us ask Barkilphedro about it. He ought to know those things."

"As a devil?" asked Josiana.

"As an animal," replied Barkilphedro.

And he bowed.

"Madam," said the Queen to Josiana, "he has more wit than we."

For a man like Barkilphedro to approach the Queen, was to have a hold on her. He

could say: "I have her." Now he needed the means of making use of her.

He had a footing at court. It is superb to have a post of observation. No chance could escape him. More than once he had made the Queen smile maliciously. This was having a shooting license.

But was there no game reserved? Did this shooting license go so far as breaking the wing or the paw of some one like Her Majesty's own sister?

First point to be cleared up. Did the Queen love her sister?

One mistake may lose all. Barkilphedro watched.

Before beginning the game the player looks at his cards. What trumps has he? Barkilphedro began by considering the age of the two women: Josiana, twenty-three; Anne, forty-one. This was good. He held a good hand.

The time when a woman ceases to count by springs and begins to count by winters, is trying. She feels a dull rancor against Time within herself. The blooming young beauties, who are perfumes for others, are thorns for her, and she feels the pricking of all of these roses. It seems as if all this freshness were taken from her, and that beauty decreased in her, only because it increased in others.

To work upon this secret ill-humor, to deepen the wrinkles of a woman of forty, who is a queen, this was clearly seen by Barkilphedro.

Envy excels in exciting jealousy, as a rat excels in drawing out a crocodile.

Barkilphedro fixed his masterful gaze upon Anne.

He saw into the Queen as one sees into a stagnant pool. A marsh has its own transparency. In dirty water we see vices, in muddy water we see stupidity. Anne was nothing but muddy water.

Embryos of feeling and larvæ of ideas moved about in that thick brain.

They were not very distinct. They scarcely had outlines. They were realities, nevertheless, although shapeless. The Queen thought *this*. The Queen wished *that*. It was difficult to determine exactly what. The confused transformations which take place in stagnant water are not easy to study.

The Queen, habitually obscure, at times made abrupt and stupid remarks. Those would have to be seized. She would have to be taken in the act.

What did Queen Anne in her inmost soul wish the Duchess Josiana? Good or evil?

A problem. Barkilphedro proposed it to himself.

This problem solved, one might go farther.

Divers chances served Barkilphedro. And above all, his persistency in remaining on watch.

Anne, on her husband's side, was slightly related to the new Queen of Prussia, the wife of the king with a hundred chamberlains, and had a portrait of her, painted on enamel, after the process of Turquet of Mayerne. This Queen of Prussia also had a younger illegitimate sister, Baroness Drika.

One day, Barkilphedro being present, Anne put some questions to the Prussian Ambassador about this Drika.

"They say she is rich?"

"Very rich," replied the Ambassador.

"She has palaces?"

"More magnificent than those of the Queen, her sister."

"Whom is she to marry?"

"A very great lord, Count Gormo."

"Handsome?"

"Charming."

"Is she young?"

"Quite young."

"As handsome as the Queen?"

The Ambassador lowered his voice and replied:

"More beautiful."

"That is insolent," murmured Barkilphedro.

The Queen was silent a moment, then exclaimed:

"These bastards!"

Barkilphedro made a note of this plural.

At another time, on leaving the chapel where Barkilphedro had stood quite near the Queen, behind the two Grooms of the Almonry, Lord David Dirry-Moir, passing the files of ladies, caused a sensation by his fine appearance.

A confused murmur of feminine exclamations burst out as he passed along: "How elegant he is!—What a fine fellow!—What a grand air!—How handsome he is!"

"How disagreeable!" muttered the Queen.

Barkilphedro heard.

He made up his mind.

One might harm the Duchess without displeasing the Queen.

The first problem was solved.

Now the second presented itself.

What could he do to harm the Duchess?

What resource could his wretched position offer him for so difficult an end?

Evidently none.

XII.

SCOTLAND, IRELAND AND ENGLAND

Let us note a detail: Josiana "had the turning-box."

One will understand this, on reflecting, that she was, although on the left-hand side, the Queen's sister, that is to say, a princely personage.

To have the turning-box. What is that?

The Viscount Saint-John — pronounced Bolingbroke—wrote to Thomas Lennard, Earl of Sussex: "Two things make one great. In England, to have the *tour* (*turning-box*), in France, to have the *pour* (*For*)."

The *pour* (*For*) in France was this: When the king was traveling, the quartermaster of the court, at the "unbooting" at the halting-place on the road, each evening assigned lodgings to the persons following His Majesty. Among these lords, some had an immense privilege: "They have the *pour*—the *For*," says the *Historical Journal* of the year 1694, page 6, which means, that the quartermaster

who marks the lodgings puts "For" before their names, as: "*For M. the Prince de Soubise,*" instead of which, when he marks the lodging of a person who is not a prince, he does not put any "For," but simply his name, for instance: *Le Duc de Gesvres, the Duc de Mazarin,* etc. This "For," upon a door, indicated a prince or a favorite. Favorite, is worse than a prince. The king granted the "For," as he did the Blue Ribbon or the peerage.

To have "the turning-box" in England was less absurdly vain, but more real. It was a sign of real closeness to the reigning personage. Whoever was, by birth or favor, in a position to receive direct communication from His or Her Majesty, had a turning-box, to which a gong was affixed, in the wall of his or her bedroom. The gong sounded, the turning-box opened, and a royal missive appeared on a golden plate or a velvet cushion. Then the turning-box closed again. It was intimate and solemn. The mysterious in the familiar. The turning-box served no other purpose. Its ring announced a royal message. No one saw who brought it. It was, after all, only the king's or the queen's page. Leicester had the turning-box under Elizabeth, and Buckingham under James I. Josiana had it under Anne, although but little of a favorite.

Whoever had the turning-box was like a person having direct connection with the penny-post of heaven, and to whom God would send His carrier from time to time with a letter. No distinction was more envied. This privilege involved additional servility. It made one a little more of a lackey. At court, whatever promotes, abases. "Avoir le tour" was always said in French; this detail of English etiquette probably being an ancient French platitude.

Lady Josiana, a virgin peeress, as Elizabeth had been a virgin queen, led, now in town, now in the country, according to the season, a semi-princely life, and almost held a court of which Lord David was a courtier, with many others. Not being married, yet Lord David and Lady Josiana could show themselves together in public without being ridiculous, a thing they were fond of doing. They often went to plays, and to races, in the same coach, and occupied the same box. Marriage, which was permitted, and even imposed upon them, cooled them; but, on the whole, they were attracted to each other. The familiarities permitted to the "engaged" have an easily overstepped boundary. They abstained from these, because whatever is easy is in bad taste.

The finest boxing matches of the time took

place at Lambeth, a parish where the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury has a palace, although the air there is unwholesome, and a rich library, which is open to respectable people at certain hours. Once, it was in winter, a match between two men took place there, in an enclosed and locked meadow, at which Josiana, escorted by David, was present. She had inquired: "Are women admitted?" and David had replied, *sunt fœminæ magnates*. Free translation: "No middle-class women." Literal translation: "Great ladies exist." A duchess enters everywhere. That is why Lady Josiana saw the boxing match.

Lady Josiana merely made the concession of dressing herself like a gentleman, a very general thing at that time. Women hardly ever traveled otherwise. Out of the six persons that the Windsor coach carried, it was rare that there were not one or two women dressed as men. This was a mark of gentry.

Lord David being in the company of a woman, could not take part in the match, and had to remain a simple spectator.

Lady Josiana betrayed her quality only by this, that she looked through a lorgnette, which was a nobleman's act.

The "noble encounter" was presided over by Lord Germaine, great-grandfather, or grand-uncle of that Lord Germaine who,

towards the end of the eighteenth century, was a colonel and took to his heels in battle, later, was Minister of War, and only escaped the muskets of the enemy to fall under the sarcasms of Sheridan, a worse kind of shot. Many noblemen were betting: Harry Bellew, of Carleton, who had claims to the extinct peerage of Bella-Aqua, against Henry, Lord Hyde, member of Parliament, for the borough of Dunhivid, which is also called Launceston; the Honorable Peregrine Bertie, member for the borough of Truro, against Sir Thomas Colpepper, member for Maidstone; the Laird of Lamyrbau, which belongs to the march of Lothian, against Samuel Trefusis, of the borough of Penryn; Sir Bartholomew Gracedieu, of the borough of Saint-Ives, against the very Honorable Charles Bodville, who is called Lord Robartes, and who is Custos Rotulorum of the county of Cornwall. Besides others.

The two boxers were an Irishman from Tipperary, called by the name of his native mountain Phelem-ghe-Madone, and a Scotchman named Helmsgail. This set two national prides face to face. Ireland and Scotland were about to pummel each other; Erin was going to deal blows to Gajothel. Hence the bets exceeded forty thousand guineas without counting the stakes.

The two champions were naked except for very short breeches buckled around their hips, and brogans, with hob-nailed soles, laced to the ankles.

Helmsgail, the Scotchman, was a little fellow, hardly nineteen years old, but his forehead was already stitched up; that is why they bet two and a third to one on him. The previous month he smashed one of the ribs and gouged out both eyes of the boxer, Six-miles-water; which explained the enthusiasm. His backers had won twelve thousand pounds sterling on him. Besides his stitched forehead, Helmsgail had had some of his teeth knocked out. He was alert and active. He was about the height of a small woman, thick-set, well knit, of a low and threatening stature, and nothing of the clay of which he was made had been wasted; not a muscle which did not go to the mark,—pugilism. There was compactness in his solid trunk, as brown and shining as bronze. He smiled, and the three teeth which he had lost added something to his smile.

His adversary was vast and wide, which means, weak.

He was a man of forty. He was six feet high, with the chest of a hippopotamus, and a mild look. His blow could have split the deck of a ship, but he did not know how

to give it. The Irishman, Phelem-ghe-Madone was, above all things, a surface, and seemed to enter boxing matches, more for taking than for giving back. Only, one felt that he would hold out a long time. A sort of underdone roast beef, hard to bite and impossible to eat. He was what is called in local slang, *raw meat.* He squinted. He seemed resigned.

These two men had passed the preceding night side by side, in the same bed, and had slept together. They had each drunk three finger-breadths of port wine from the same glass.

Each had his group of backers, rough looking people, threatening the referees at need. In Helmsgail's group might be seen John Gromane, famous for carrying an ox on his back, and a certain John Bray, who one day had taken ten bushels of flour, of fifteen gallons to the bushel, in addition to the miller, on his shoulders, and had walked a distance of more than two hundred paces with this load. On Phelem-ghe-Madone's side, Lord Hyde had brought a certain Kilter from Launceston, who lived at Shotover (Chateau Vert), and who could throw a stone weighing twenty pounds, over his shoulder, higher than the highest tower of the castle. These three men, Kilter, Bray and

Gromane, were from Cornwall, which does honor to the county.

Other backers were brutal fellows, strong-backed, bandy-legged, with big knotty hands, dull faces, ragged and afraid of nothing, almost all of them being released convicts.

Many of them understood admirably how to make policemen drunk. Every profession must have its talents.

The field chosen was beyond the Bear Garden, where bears, bulls and dogs were formerly made to fight, beyond the last buildings in process of construction, adjoining the ruins of the Priory of Saint-Mary Overy, destroyed by Henry VIII. The wind was northerly, the weather was frosty; a fine rain was falling, which was quickly congealed into sheet-ice. Among the gentlemen who were present, those who were the fathers of families could be recognized because they had opened their umbrellas.

On Phelem-ghe-Madone's side Colonel Moncrief was referee, and Kilter was second.

On Helmsgail's side the Honorable Pughe Beaumaris was referee, and Lord Desertum, of Kilkarry, second.

The two boxers were motionless in the enclosure for some moments, while the watches were being regulated. Then they walked up to each other and shook hands.

Phelem-ghe-Madone said to Helmsgail: "I'd like to go home."

Helmsgail replied politely: "The gentry must get something for having put themselves out."

Naked as they were, they were cold. Phelem-ghe-Madone was shivering. His jaws chattered.

Doctor Eleanor Sharp, nephew of the Archbishop of York, called out to them: "Pitch in, my boys, that will warm you."

These kindly words thawed them.

They started in.

But neither one nor the other was angry. There were three feeble rounds. The Reverend Doctor Gumdraith, one of the forty Fellows of All Souls' College, shouted: "Pour some gin into them!"

But the two referees, and the two seconds—judges, all four—upheld the rule. It was very cold, however.

The cry: "First blood!" was heard. The first blood was claimed. They were again brought face to face.

They looked at each other, approached, stretched their arms, touched each other's fists, then fell back. Suddenly, Helmsgail, the little man, sprang forward.

The real fight began.

Phelem-ghe-Madone was struck straight in the forehead, between the two eyebrows. His

whole face streamed with blood. The crowd shouted: "*Helmsgail has tapped his claret!*" They applauded. Phelem-ghe-Madone, whirling his arms like a windmill's sails, began to throw his fists about, at random.

The Honorable Peregrine Bertie said: "Blinded. But not yet blind."

Then Helmsgail heard this encouragement burst forth on all sides: "*Bung his peepers!*"

On the whole, the two champions were really well chosen, and although the weather was not very favorable, it was understood that the match would be a success. The semi-giant Phelem-ghe-Madone had the disadvantage of his advantages; he moved heavily. His arms were clubs, but his body was a clump. The little fellow ran, struck, jumped, gnashed his teeth, redoubled vigor by swiftness, knew the tricks. On one side, there was the primitive blow, savage, untaught, in a state of ignorance; on the other side, the blow of civilization. Helmsgail fought as much with his nerves as with his muscles, and with his cunning as much as with his strength; Phelem-ghe-Madone was a sort of inert pounder, somewhat overfreighted himself, to start with. It was art against nature. It was ferocity against barbarism.

It was clear that barbarism would be beaten, but not very quickly. Hence the interest.

A little fellow against a big one. Chances are for the little one. A cat gets the better of a bull dog. Goliaths are always vanquished by Davids.

A hail of exclamations fell on the combatants. "Bravo, Helmsgail! Good! Well done, Highlander! Now, Phelem!"

And Helmsgail's friends kindly repeated their exhortations: "Bung his peepers!"

Helmsgail did better. Suddenly, bending down and rising with the curve of a reptile, he struck Phelem-ghe-Madone on the breast bone. The colossus staggered.

"Foul blow!" cried Viscount Barnard.

Phelem-ghe-Madone sank back on Kilter's knee, saying: "I am beginning to warm up."

Lord Desertum consulted the referees, and said: "Five minutes before time is called."

Phelem-ghe-Madone was fainting. Kilter wiped the blood from his eyes, and the sweat from his body with a flannel, and put the neck of a bottle in his mouth. They were at the eleventh round. Besides the wound on his forehead, Phelem-ghe-Madone's pectoral muscles were deformed by blows, his abdomen swollen, and the crown of his head bruised. Helmsgail had not a scratch.

A kind of tumult broke out among the gentlemen.

Lord Barnard repeated: "Foul blow."

"All bets void," said the Laird of Lamyrbau.

"I claim my stakes," said Sir Thomas Colpepper.

And the honorable member for the borough of Saint-Ives, Sir Bartholomew Gracedieu, added:

"Give me back my five hundred guineas, for I am going away."

"Stop the match!" cried the spectators.

But Phelem-ghe-Madone rose almost as shaky as a drunken man, and said:

"Let us go on with the match on one condition. I am to have the right of giving a foul blow, too."

They shouted: "Agreed," on all sides.

Helmsgail shrugged his shoulders.

The five minutes over, the next round began.

The fight, which was an agony for Phelem-ghe-Madone, was sport for Helmsgail.

What a thing science is! The little man found means to put the big one in chancery, that is to say, that all at once, Helmsgail took Phelem-ghe-Madone's big head under his left arm, which was curved like a steel crescent, and held it there under his armpit, with bent neck and lowered nape, while with his right fist, falling again and again, like a hammer on a nail, but from below, and hitting upwards and underneath, he smashed his opponent's face at

ease. When Phelem-ghe-Madone, released at last, raised his head, he had no more face.

That which had been a nose, eyes and a mouth, now looked only like a black sponge steeped in blood. He spat. Four teeth were seen on the ground.

Then he fell. Kilter received him on his knee.

Helmsgail was hardly touched. He had a few insignificant bruises, and a scratch on one collar bone.

Nobody was cold any longer. They were betting sixteen and a quarter on Helmsgail against Phelem-ghe-Madone.

Harry Carleton shouted:

"There is no more Phelem-ghe-Madone. I bet my peerage of Bella-Aqua and my title of Lord Bellew, against the Archbishop of Canterbury's old wig, on Helmsgail."

"Give me your snout!" said Kilter to Phelem-ghe-Madone, and stuffing his bloody flannel in the bottle, he washed him clean with gin. The mouth re-appeared, and Phelem-ghe-Madone opened one eyelid. His temples seemed cracked.

"Another round, my friend," said Kilter. And he added: "For the honor of the low town."

The Welsh and the Irish understand each other; however, Phelem-ghe-Madone gave no

sign which could indicate that he had anything left in his mind.

Phelem-ghe-Madone rose, Kilter supporting him. It was the twenty-fifth round. By the way in which this Cyclops, for he had but one eye left, placed himself in position, it was understood that this was the finish, and nobody doubted that he was lost. He placed his guard above his chin, the awkwardness of a dying man. Helmsgail, scarcely sweating, exclaimed: "I bet on myself. A thousand to one."

Helmsgail, raising his arm, struck, and it was strange, both fell. A grunt of satisfaction was heard.

It was Phelem-ghe-Madone's expression of satisfaction.

He had taken advantage of the terrible blow that Helmsgail had given him on the skull, to give him a foul blow on the navel.

Helmsgail, stretched out on his back, breathed with a rattling sound.

The spectators looked at Helmsgail on the ground and said: "Paid back."

Everybody clapped hands, even the losers.

Phelem-ghe-Madone had returned foul blow for foul blow, and acted according to his rights.

Helmsgail was carried off on a stretcher. The opinion was that he would not get over it. Lord Robartes exclaimed: "I win twelve

hundred guineas." Phelem-ghe-Madone was evidently maimed for life.

As she came out, Josiana took Lord David's arm, which is tolerated between the "engaged." She said to him:

"It is very fine. But—"

"But what?"

"I should have thought that it would have driven away my spleen. Well, it has not."

Lord David stopped, looked at Josiana, closed his mouth and blew out his cheeks, whilst he shook his head, which signifies: Attention! and said to the Duchess:

"There is but one remedy for *ennui*."

"Which?"

"Gwynplaine."

The Duchess asked:

"And who may Gwynplaine be?"

BOOK TWO

GWYNPLAINE AND DEA

I.

WHERE WE SEE THE FACE OF HIM WHOSE ACTIONS ALONE WE HAVE SEEN HITHERTO

Nature had been prodigal of her favors towards Gwynplaine. She had given him a mouth, opening as far as his ears, ears folding over to his eyes, a shapeless nose made for the oscillation of a grimace-maker's spectacles, and a face that one could not look at without laughing.

We have just said that Nature had overwhelmed Gwynplaine with her gifts. But was it Nature?

Had she not been assisted?

Two eyes, like party-wall windows, a hiatus for a mouth, a flattened protuberance with two holes, which were nostrils, a crushed mass for a face, and all that, having laughter as a resultant, certainly Nature does not produce such masterpieces by herself.

But, is laughter the synonym of joy?

If, in presence of this mountebank—for he was a mountebank—one allowed the first

impression of gaiety to pass off, and the man was observed with attention, traces of art could be recognized. Such a face is not accidental, but intentional. It is not Nature's way to be so complete. Man has no power over his beauty, but all power over his ugliness. You cannot make a Roman profile out of a Hottentot profile, but you can make a Calmuck nose out of a Greek one. It is only necessary to obliterate the root of the nose and flatten the nostrils. The low Latin of the Middle Ages did not create the word *denasare* (de-nose) for nothing. Was Gwynplaine, as a child, sufficiently worthy of attention for some one to be interested in him to the extent of modifying his face? Why not? If it were for the motive of exhibition and speculation only. According to all appearance, skilful handlers of children had worked on that face. It seemed evident that a mysterious science, probably an occult one, which was to surgery what alchemy is to chemistry, had chiseled this flesh, most assuredly in earliest infancy, and created this face, with premeditation. This science, skilled in incisions, obtusions and ligatures, had slit the mouth, rolled back the lips, laid bare the gums, distended the ears, removed the cartilages, disarranged the eyebrows and the cheeks, enlarged the zygomatic muscle,

smoothed over the surgical seams and scars, drawn the skin back over the excisions while, at the same time, the face was kept in its gaping condition, and from this powerful and deep sculpture there had come forth that mask,—Gwynplaine.

One is not born thus.

However, it may have been, Gwynplaine was an admirable success.

Gwynplaine was a gift made by Providence to the sadness of man. By what Providence? Is there a demon's Providence, as there is a God's Providence? We put the question without solving it.

Gwynplaine was a mountebank. He showed himself in public. No effect could be compared with that which he produced. He cured hypochondria by merely showing himself. He had to be avoided by persons in mourning, who, if they saw him, became confused, and were forced to laugh indecently. One day the executioner came, and Gwynplaine made him laugh. You saw Gwynplaine, and you held your sides; he spoke, and you rolled on the ground. He was the opposite pole of sadness. Spleen was at one end and Gwynplaine at the other.

Thus, he had rapidly achieved a very satisfactory renown as a horrible man, on fair grounds and at cross-roads.

It was by laughing that Gwynplaine provoked laughter. And yet he did not laugh. His face laughed, his thought did not. The sort of unheard-of face, that chance or a specially strange art had fashioned for him, laughed by itself. Gwynplaine had nothing to do with it. The exterior did not depend on the interior. This laugh which he had not placed on his forehead, on his cheeks, on his brows, on his mouth, he could not remove. Laughter had been stamped upon his face, forever. It was an automatic laugh, and all the more irresistible because it was petrified. No one could escape that facial distortion. Two convulsions of the mouth are infectious, the laugh and the yawn. By virtue of the mysterious operation, probably undergone by Gwynplaine when a child, all the parts of his face contributed to this distortion, his whole physiognomy tended to it, as a wheel concentrates in the hub; all his emotions, whatever they might be, augmented this strange face of joy, or we had better say, aggravated it. Any surprise which he might have, any pain or suffering which he might feel, any anger which might come upon him, any pity which he might have experienced, would only have increased this hilarity of his muscles; if he had wept, he would have laughed; and whatever Gwynplaine did,

whatever he wished, whatever he thought, as soon as he raised his head, the crowd, if the crowd was there, had before their eyes this apparition,—an overwhelming burst of laughter.

Imagine a gay Medusa's head.

All that was in one's mind was put to flight by this unexpectedness, and laughter was imperative.

Antique art formerly affixed a joyous bronze face to the pediments of Greek theatres. This face was called Comedy. This bronze seemed to laugh, and caused laughter, yet was pensive. All the parody which ends in madness, all the irony which ends in wisdom, were condensed and amalgamated in this face; the sum of cares, of lost illusions, of disgusts, and of sorrows, was made up on that impassive brow, and gave that melancholy total, mirth; one corner of the mouth was raised, on the side towards the human race, by mockery, and the other corner, on the side towards the gods, by blasphemy; men came to confront their individual copy of irony with this model of ideal sarcasm; and the crowd, which was constantly renewed around this fixed laugh, were ready to die with delight before the sepulchral immobility of the sneering smile. One might almost say, that this sombre dead mask of antique comedy fitted on a living

man, was Gwynplaine. He had that infernal head of implacable hilarity on his neck. Eternal laughter! What a burden for the shoulders of a man!

An eternal laugh! Let us explain, and understand each other. If we may believe the Manicheans, the Absolute occasionally bends, and God Himself has intermittences. Let us come to an understanding as to the will, also. We do not admit that it can ever be quite powerless. Every existence resembles a letter, modified by the postscript. For Gwynplaine, the postscript was this: by force of will, and by concentrating all his attention upon it, and on condition that no emotion should intervene to distract and slacken the fixity of his effort, he could succeed in suspending the eternal distortion of his face, and throw a sort of tragic veil over it,—then, there was no more laughing before him, men shuddered.

Let us say that Gwynplaine scarcely ever made this effort, for it was a painful fatigue, and an unbearable tension. Besides, the slightest distraction and the slightest emotion were enough to make that laugh, chased away for a moment, but which was as irresistible as the tide, re-appear on his face, and it was all the more intense, in proportion to the power of the emotion, whatever it might have been.

With this one restriction, Gwynplaine's laugh was eternal.

People saw Gwynplaine and laughed. When they had laughed, they turned away their heads. Women especially, were horrified. This man was frightful. The comical convulsion was like paying a tribute, you submitted to it, joyously, but almost mechanically. After it, once the laugh had cooled, Gwynplaine was intolerable for a woman to look at and impossible to contemplate.

Beyond this, he was tall, well made, agile, in no way deformed, except in face. This was one indication the more, among the presumptions which permitted one to suppose Gwynplaine to be rather a creation of art, than a work of Nature. Beautiful in body, Gwynplaine had probably been beautiful in face. At birth, he must have been like any other child. They had preserved the body intact, and only retouched his face. Gwynplaine had been re-made on purpose.

This was, at least, the probability.

They had left him his teeth. Teeth are necessary for a laugh. Even the skull retains them.

The operation performed upon him must have been dreadful. He did not remember it, which does not prove that he had not

undergone it. This surgical sculpture could have succeeded only on a very young child, consequently one having but little consciousness of what was happening to it, and easily mistaking a wound for a sickness. Besides, even in those times, it will be recollected, the means for putting a patient to sleep and suppressing pain were known. Only, at that time, they were called magic. To-day they are called anæsthesia.

In addition to this face, those who had brought him up had given him the training of a gymnast and an athlete; his joints, usefully dislocated, and fitted for bending the wrong way, had received a clown's education, and could move in all directions, like door hinges. In fitting him for his trade of mountebank, nothing had been neglected.

His hair had been dyed the color of ochre, once for all; a secret which has been re-discovered in our day. Pretty women make use of it; what was considered ugly, formerly, is found good for embellishing nowadays. Gwynplaine had yellow hair. This apparently corrosive hair-painting had left it woolly and rough to the touch. This tawny bristling, which was more a mane than hair, covered and concealed a lofty brow made to contain thought. The operation, whatever it had been, which had taken away the harmony of

this face, and put all this flesh in disorder, had had no effect on the bony case. Gwynplaine's facial angle was powerful and surprising. Behind that laugh there was a soul, which dreamed, as we all dream.

Moreover, this laugh was quite a talent for Gwynplaine. He could not help it, and he turned it to account. By means of this laugh he earned his living.

Gwynplaine—he has, no doubt, been already recognized—was that child who was abandoned one winter evening on the coast of Portland, and sheltered in a poor hut on wheels at Weymouth.

II.

DEA

The child, at this time, was a man. Fifteen years had elapsed. It was in 1705. Gwynplaine was approaching his twenty-fifth year.

Ursus had kept the two children with him. This had made a wandering group.

Ursus and Homo had grown old. Ursus had become quite bald. The wolf was turning gray. The age of wolves is not determined like the age of dogs. According to Molin, there are wolves that live eighty years, among others, the little Koupara, *caviœ vorus*, and the rank smelling wolf, *canis nubilus*, of Say.

The little girl, found on the dead woman, was now a tall creature sixteen years old, pale, with brown hair, slight, frail, almost tremulous from excess of delicacy and making one fear to crush her, admirably beautiful, with eyes full of light,—yet blind.

That fatal winter night, which had overthrown the beggar and her child, in the snow,

had struck a double blow. It had killed the mother and blinded the daughter.

The *drop serene* had forever paralyzed the eyes of that daughter, now become a woman in her turn. On her face, through which the light of day never passed, the sadly lowered corners of her lips expressed bitter disappointment. Her large and clear eyes were strange in this respect, that, though quenched for her, they shone for others. Mysterious lighted torches illumining the outside only. She gave light, she who had none herself. Those vanished eyes were resplendent. This captive of darkness brightened her gloomy surroundings. From the depth of her incurable obscurity, from behind that black wall called blindness, she cast a radiance. She did not see the sun outside of her, and one could see her very soul within her.

Her dead look had an indescribable, celestial fixedness.

She was Night, and from the irremediable gloom, amalgamated with herself, she came out, a star.

Ursus, with a mania for Latin names, had christened her Dea. He had consulted his wolf a little, and had said to him: "You represent man, I represent the beast; we are the lower world; this little one shall represent the world above. So much weakness

is omnipotence. In this way the whole universe, humanity, bestiality, divinity, will be in our hut." The wolf had made no objection.

And it was thus that the foundling was called Dea.

As to Gwynplaine, Ursus had not had the trouble of inventing a name for him. On the very morning of the day when he had ascertained the little boy's disfigurement, and the little girl's blindness, he had asked: "Boy, what is your name?"

And the boy had replied: "They call me Gwynplaine."

"Gwynplaine be it, then," Ursus had said.

Dea assisted Gwynplaine in his performances.

If human misery could be summed up, the sum would have been found in Gwynplaine and Dea. They each seemed to have been born in a compartment of the sepulchre; Gwynplaine in its horror, and Dea in its darkness. Their existences seemed made of different sorts of obscurity taken from the two formidable sides of life. Dea had this gloom within her, and Gwynplaine had it upon him. There was something of the phantom in Dea, and of the spectre in Gwynplaine. Dea's share was doleful, and Gwynplaine's something worse. There was

for Gwynplaine, who could see, a harrowing possibility which did not exist for blind Dea, —that of comparing himself to other men. Now, in a situation like Gwynplaine's, assuming that he would try to explain it, to compare himself, would be to understand himself no longer. To have, like Dea, an empty look from which the world is absent, is a supreme affliction, yet less than this one, namely: to be one's own enigma; to feel besides that something is absent which is one's very self; to see the universe, and not to see one's self. Dea had a veil—night, and Gwynplaine had a mask,—his face. Inexpressible fact, it was with his own flesh that Gwynplaine was masked. What his face had been he did not know. His countenance had vanished. They had put a false self upon him. His own face had disappeared. His head lived, and his face was dead. He did not remember having seen it. The human race for Dea, as well as for Gwynplaine, was an external fact; they were far away from it; she was alone, he was alone; Dea's isolation was funereal, she saw nothing; Gwynplaine's isolation was ominous, he saw everything. For Dea, creation did not go beyond hearing and touch; the real was bounded, limited, short, immediately lost; she had no other infinite but darkness. For Gwynplaine, to live, was to

have the crowd forever before him, and beyond him. Dea was exiled from light; Gwynplaine was banished from life. Here were, indeed, two hopeless creatures. The depths of possible calamity were reached. They were sunken there, he, as well as she. An observer who might have seen them, would have felt his reverie end in measureless pity. What must they not suffer? A decree of unhappiness visibly rested on these two human creatures, and never had fatality more admirably arranged destiny as a torture, and life as a hell, than around these two beings who had done no harm.

They were in a Paradise.

They loved each other.

Gwynplaine adored Dea. Dea idolized Gwynplaine.

"Thou art so beautiful!" she said to him.

III.

"OCULOS NON HABET ET VIDET"

A single woman on earth saw Gwynplaine. It was this blind one.

What Gwynplaine had been for her, she knew through Ursus, to whom Gwynplaine had related his rough journey from Portland to Weymouth, and the sufferings mingled with his abandonment. She knew that when an infant, dying upon her dead mother, sucking at a corpse, a being, only somewhat less small than herself, had picked her up; that this being, shut out, and, as it were, buried under the dark universal refusal, had heard her cry; that everybody being deaf to him, he had not been deaf to her; that this isolated, feeble, rejected child, without anything to lean upon here below, dragging himself through the desert, exhausted with fatigue, crushed, had accepted a burden from the hands of night, another child; that he, who had no share to expect in that obscure

distribution that is called fate, had yet loaded himself with another destiny; that though he was nakedness, anguish and distress, he had made himself a Providence; that Heaven closing itself, he had opened his heart; that, though lost, he had saved; that having neither roof nor shelter, he had been a refuge; that he had made himself mother and nurse; that he, who was alone in the world, had responded to desertion by adoption; that, in darkness, he had given this example; that, not finding himself sufficiently overwhelmed, he had accepted the misery of another, in addition; that, on this earth where there seemed to be nothing for him, he had discovered duty; that where everyone would have hesitated, he had gone forward; that where everyone would have recoiled, he had consented; that he had put his hand in the opening of the sepulchre and had drawn her out of it, drawn her, Dea; that half naked, he had given her his rags, because she was cold; that famished, he had thought of making her drink and eat; that for this little girl, this little boy had fought Death; that he had fought it in every form; in the form of winter and snow, in the form of solitude, in the form of terror, in the form of cold, hunger and thirst, in the form of hurricane; that for her, Dea, this ten-year-old Titan had given

battle to nocturnal immensity. She knew that he had done this, as a child, and now, as a man, he was strength to her weakness, riches to her poverty, healing to her sickness, and sight to her blindness. Through the unknown denseness, by which she felt herself held at a distance, she clearly distinguished this devotion, this abnegation, this courage. Heroism, in the immaterial region, had an outline. She caught this sublime outline; in the inexpressible abstraction, in which a thought, which is not lighted by the sun, lives, she perceived this mysterious lineament of virtue. In that environment of dark things set in motion, which was the only impression reality made upon her, in that uneasy stagnation of the passive creature, always on the watch for possible peril, in that sensation of being without defense, which is the whole life of the blind, she was certain that Gwynplaine was above her, Gwynplaine never less warm, never absent, never eclipsed, Gwynplaine, tender, helpful and gentle; Dea thrilled with certitude and gratitude, her reassured anxiety ended in ecstasy, and with her eyes filled with darkness, she contemplated his goodness, that profound light in the zenith of her abyss.

In the ideal, goodness is the sun; and Gwynplaine dazzled Dea.

For the crowd, which has too many heads to have a thought, and too many eyes to have a look, for the crowd, which being superficial itself, stops short at surfaces, Gwynplaine was a clown, a buffoon, a mountebank, a grotesque creature, a little more and a little less than an animal. The crowd knew only the face.

For Dea, Gwynplaine was the savior, who had gathered her into his arms in the tomb, and carried her out; the consoler, who was making life possible for her; the liberator, whose hand she felt in her own, in that labyrinth, blindness; Gwynplaine was the brother, the friend, the guide, the support, the fellow creature from above, the winged and radiant spouse, and, where the crowd saw but a monster, she saw the archangel.

This was because Dea, being blind, saw the soul.

IV.

THE WELL-MATCHED LOVERS

Ursus, as a philosopher, understood. He approved of Dea's fascination.

"The blind see the invisible."

He said,—

"Conscience is vision."

He looked at Gwynplaine, and muttered,—

"Semi-monster, but demi-god."

Gwynplaine, on his side, was intoxicated with Dea. There is the invisible eye, the mind, and there is the visible eye, the pupil. It was with the visible eye that he saw her. Dea was dazzled by the ideal, Gwynplaine was dazzled by the real. Gwynplaine was not ugly, he was frightful; he had his contrast before him. Dea was just as suave as he was terrible. He was horror, she was grace. There was something of the vision in Dea. She seemed a partially embodied dream. In her whole person, in her Eolian structure, in her delicate and supple figure, tremulous as a reed, in her, perchance, invisibly winged shoulders, in the discreet curves of her

outline, just indicating her sex, rather to the spirit though, than to the senses, in her fairness, which was almost transparency, in the august, serene closure of her gaze, divinely shut to all on earth, in the sacred innocence of her smile, there was an exquisite nearness to angels, and yet she was just enough of a woman.

Gwynplaine, as we have said, compared himself, and he compared Dea.

His existence, such as it was, was the result of a double and unheard-of choice. It was the point of intersection of two rays, one from below and one from above, the black ray and the white ray. The same crumb may be pecked at by the two beaks of Good and Evil at the same time, one giving a bite, the other a kiss. Gwynplaine was this crumb, a bruised and caressed atom. Gwynplaine was the product of a fatality, mixed up with Providence. Misfortune had laid its finger upon him, and happiness as well. Two extreme destinies composed his strange lot. There was an anathema and a benediction upon him. He was the accursed elect. Who was he? He knew not. When he looked at himself, he saw a stranger. But this stranger was monstrous. Gwynplaine lived in a sort of decapitation, having a face which was not his own. This face was horrible, so horrible

that it amused. It frightened people so much that they had to laugh. He was infernally comical. It was the wreck of the human face in a bestial mask. Never had a more total eclipse of man been seen on the human face, never had a parody been more complete, never had a more frightful outline sneered in a nightmare, never had all that can repel a woman been more hideously amalgamated in a man; the unfortunate heart, masked and calumniated by that face, seemed condemned to everlasting solitude beneath that visage, as beneath the lid of a tomb. Well, no! Where unknown malice had exhausted itself, invisible goodness was lavishing itself in turn. In this poor, suddenly raised, outcast, it was placing all that attracts by the side of all that repels, it placed the loadstone in the reef, it made a soul fly at full speed towards this abandoned one, it charged the dove to console the thunder-stricken, and made beauty adore deformity.

In order to make this possible, it was necessary that the beauty should not see the disfigured one. For this happiness, this misfortune was indispensable. Providence had made Dea blind.

Gwynplaine vaguely felt himself the object of a redemption. Why the persecution? He knew not. Why the ransom? He knew not.

A halo had come to place itself upon his blight; that was all he knew. When Gwynplaine had been old enough to understand, Ursus had read and explained the text of Dr. Conquest, *De Denasatis*, to him, and from another folio, Hugo Plagon (Versio Gallica Will. Tyrii, lib. II., cap. XXIII.), the passage, *nares habens mutilas;* but Ursus had prudently abstained from "hypotheses," and had taken good care to draw no conclusions whatever. Suppositions were possible, the probability of a violent deed inflicted on Gwynplaine in childhood was dimly seen; but for Gwynplaine there was only one proof, the result. His destiny was to live under a stigma. Why this stigma? No reply. Silence and solitude surrounded Gwynplaine. All was uncertain in the conjectures which could be fitted to this tragic reality, and nothing was certain except the terrible fact. In this discouragement, Dea intervened; a sort of celestial interposition between Gwynplaine and despair. Touched, and, as it were, warmed, he perceived the sweetness of this exquisite girl turned towards his horror; beatified astonishment softened his Draconian face; made for horror, there was this prodigious exception for him—being admired and adored in the ideal by Light, and, though a monster, he felt upon himself the gaze of a star.

Gwynplaine and Dea were a pair, and these two pathetic hearts adored each other. One nest, and two birds; that was their story. They had returned to the universal law, which is, to please, to seek, and to find one another.

Thus hatred had made a mistake. Gwynplaine's persecutors, whoever they might be, the enigmatical fury, wherever it might have come from, had missed their aim. They had wanted to make a hopeless, they had made an enchanted, creature. They had betrothed him in advance to a healing wound. They had predestined him to be consoled by an affliction. The executioner's pincers had gently become a woman's hand. Gwynplaine was horrible, artificially horrible, horrible by the hand of men; they had hoped to isolate him forever, first from his family, if he had a family, then from humanity; as a child they had made him a ruin, but this ruin Nature had reclaimed as she reclaims all ruins; Nature had consoled this solitude, as she consoles all solitudes; Nature comes to the rescue of all desertions; where everything is wanting, she gives herself back entirely; she blossoms and grows green on all that has crumbled; she has ivy for stones, and love for men.

Profound generosity of the impenetrable shadows.

V.

THE BLUE SPOT IN THE BLACK CLOUDS

Thus these two unfortunates lived, one by the help of the other, Dea supported, Gwynplaine accepted.

This orphan girl had this orphan boy. The helpless one had the ill-favored one.

These widowhoods wedded each other.

An ineffable thanksgiving was exhaled by these two distresses. They gave thanks.

To whom?

Dark immensity.

To simply thank, is enough. Thanksgiving has wings, and goes where it should. Your prayer knows more about it than you do.

How many men have thought they were praying to Jupiter, when they were praying to Jehovah! How many believers in amulets have been listened to by the Infinite! How many atheists do not perceive that by the mere fact of being good and sad they are praying to God!

Gwynplaine and Dea were grateful.

Deformity is expulsion. Blindness is a precipice. The expulsion was adopted; the precipice was habitable.

Gwynplaine saw coming down towards him, in full light, in an arrangement of destiny which resembled the perspective of a dream, a white cloud of beauty, having a woman's form, a radiant vision, in which there was a heart, and this apparition, almost a cloud, and yet a woman, clasped him close, and this vision embraced him, and that heart desired him; Gwynplaine was no longer ill-favored, being loved; a rose asked a caterpillar in marriage, feeling the divine butterfly within that caterpillar; Gwynplaine, the rejected, was chosen.

To have what one needs—all lies there. Gwynplaine had it. Dea had it.

The deep humiliation of the disfigured one, now lightened, and as it were, sublimated, expanded into intoxication, into ecstasy, into faith; and a hand was stretched towards the dark hesitation of the blind girl in her night.

It was the penetration of two misfortunes into the ideal, one absorbing the other. Two exclusions admitted each other. Two gaps joined to complete each other. They held fast to one another, by what they lacked. Where one was poor, the other was rich. The

misfortune of one made the treasure of the other. If Dea had not been blind, would she have chosen Gwynplaine? If Gwynplaine had not been disfigured, would he have preferred Dea? She probably would no more have wanted the disfigured man than he the infirm girl. What happiness for Dea, that Gwynplaine was hideous! What luck for Gwynplaine, that Dea was blind! Outside of their providential matching, they were impossible. An immense need of one another was at the bottom of their love. Gwynplaine saved Dea, Dea saved Gwynplaine. A meeting of miseries, producing adherence. It was the embrace of the drowned in the abyss. Nothing could be closer, nothing more hopeless, nothing more exquisite.

Gwynplaine had but one thought:

"What should I be without her?"

Dea had but one thought:

"What should I be without him?"

These two banishments made a new fatherland; these two incurable fatalities, Gwynplaine's stigma, and Dea's blindness, effected their junction in satisfaction. They were sufficient unto each other, they imagined nothing beyond themselves; to speak to one another was a delight, to draw near each other was beatitude; by dint of reciprocal intuition, they had reached a unity of reverie;

they both thought the same thoughts. When Gwynplaine walked, Dea thought she heard the step of a demi-god. They pressed close to each other, in a sort of sidereal transparent shadow, full of perfumes, of lights, of music, of luminous architecture, of dreams; they belonged to each other; they knew that they would be together forever, in the same joy, and in the same ecstasy; and nothing was stranger than this construction of an Eden by two of the damned.

They were inexpressibly happy.

Out of their hell they had made a heaven; such is thy power, Love!

Dea heard Gwynplaine laugh. And Gwynplaine saw Dea smile.

Thus ideal felicity was found, the perfect joy of life was realized, the mysterious problem of happiness was solved. And by whom? By two poor wretches.

For Gwynplaine, Dea was "splendor." For Dea, Gwynplaine was "the presence."

"The presence," profound mystery, which makes the invisible, divine, and whence results that other mystery, confidence. This is the only thing that is irreducible in religions. But this irreducible something suffices. We do not see the immense Indispensable Being; we feel Him.

Gwynplaine was Dea's religion.

Sometimes, carried away by love, she would kneel before him, a sort of beautiful priestess, adoring the beaming gnome of a pagoda.

Imagine the abyss, and in the midst of the abyss, an oasis of light, and in that oasis, these two creatures shut out of life, dazzling each other.

No purity can be compared to this love. Dea was ignorant of what a kiss might be, although, perhaps, she might have desired one; for blindness, above all, in a woman, has its dreams, and, although trembling at the approaches of the unknown, does not hate them all. As for Gwynplaine, quivering youth made him pensive; the more intoxicated he felt himself, the more timid he became; he might have dared everything, with this companion of his earliest years, with this maiden, as ignorant of sin as of light, with this blind girl, who saw but one thing, that she adored him. But he would have thought that he was stealing what she would have given him; so he resigned himself, with contented melancholy, to loving as the angels love, and the feeling of his disfigurement resolved itself into an august modesty.

These happy creatures dwelt in the ideal. They were wedded in it, at a distance, like the spheres. In the depths of blue space they exchanged the profound effluvium which in

infinity, is attraction, and on earth, sex. They gave each other kisses of the soul.

They had always led a life in common. They had no consciousness of any life apart. Dea's childhood had coincided with Gwynplaine's youth. They had grown up side by side. For a long time they had slept in the same bed, the hut not being a spacious bed-chamber. They, on the chest, Ursus on the floor; that was the arrangement. Then, one fine day, Dea being still little, Gwynplaine saw that he was big, and shame had begun on the man's side. He had said to Ursus: "I want to sleep on the floor, too." And when evening came, he had stretched himself near the old man, on the bearskin. Then Dea cried. She wanted her bedfellow. But Gwynplaine, who had become uneasy, for he had begun to love, held firm. From that moment he had slept on the floor with Ursus. In the fine summer nights, he slept outside, with Homo. Dea was not yet resigned to this when she was thirteen years old. In the evening she often said: "Gwynplaine, come next to me; that will make me sleep." A man beside her was a necessity for the innocent girl's slumbers. Nakedness is seeing one's self naked; hence, she was ignorant of nudity. Arcadian, or Otaheitian ingenuousness. Dea's unsophistication made Gwynplaine

austere. It sometimes happened that Dea, when she was almost grown up, would call Gwynplaine to her while she combed her long hair, sitting on her bed, her unfastened chemise, half dropping, permitting him a view of the scarcely modeled feminine statue, and a vague beginning of Eve. Gwynplaine would blush, lower his eyes, not know what to do before this innocent flesh, stammer, turn away his head, grow afraid and go away, and this Daphnis of darkness took flight before this Chloe of the gloom.

Such was the idyl, which had blossomed in a tragedy.

Ursus said to them :

" Old brutes ! Adore each other !"

VI.

URSUS TEACHER, AND URSUS GUARDIAN

Ursus added :

"One of these days I will play them a bad trick. I'll marry them."

Ursus taught Gwynplaine the theory of love. He said to him :

"Love !—do you know how God lights that fire? He places the woman below, the devil between, the man on the devil. A match, that is to say, a look and—there ! it is all in a blaze."

"A look is not necessary," replied Gwynplaine, thinking of Dea.

And Ursus retorted :

"Booby ! do souls need eyes to look at each other?"

Sometimes Ursus was a good fellow. Gwynplaine, at times, was so madly in love with Dea as to become melancholy, and got out of Ursus' way, feeling him a witness. One day Ursus said to him :

"Bah! Don't make yourself uncomfortable. When in love, the cock shows himself."

"But the eagle hides himself," replied Gwynplaine.

At other times Ursus would say to himself, in an aside:

"It is wise to put spokes in the wheels of Cytherea's chariot. They love each other too much. That may have some disadvantages. Let us prevent a conflagration. Let us moderate these hearts."

And Ursus had recourse to warnings of this kind, speaking to Gwynplaine while Dea slept, and to Dea when Gwynplaine's back was turned:

"Dea, you must not become too attached to Gwynplaine. It is perilous to live in another. Egoism is a good root for happiness. Men escape from women. And then Gwynplaine might end by becoming infatuated. He has so much success! You cannot imagine the success he has!"

"Gwynplaine, disproportions are good for nothing. Too much ugliness on one side, too much beauty on the other, ought to make one reflect. Temper your ardor, my boy. Do not grow too enthusiastic about Dea. Do you seriously think yourself made for her? But just consider your deformity and her

perfection. See the distance between her and you. She has everything, that Dea! What a white skin, what hair, lips that are strawberries, and her foot! As to her hand—! Her shoulders have an exquisite curve, her face is sublime, she walks, and light seems to stream from her, and that grave way of speaking, with that charming tone of voice! And with all that, to think that she is a woman! She is not such a fool as to be an angel. She is absolute beauty. Tell yourself this when you need calming."

The love between Gwynplaine and Dea grew greater from this, and Ursus was astonished at his want of success, just as if some one should say:

"This is singular. No matter how much oil I pour on the fire, I do not succeed in putting it out."

Extinguish their love? Even less than that, cool it, did he wish to do that? No, certainly not. He would have been nicely caught in his own trap if he had succeeded. In truth, this love which was a flame for them, and warmth for him, delighted him. But we tease whatever charms us, just a little. This teasing, is what men call wisdom.

Ursus had been almost father and mother for Gwynplaine and Dea. While he growled, he had brought them up; while he scolded, he had

fed them. This adoption had made the rolling hut heavier, he had been obliged to harness himself more frequently with Homo, to drag it.

Let us say, that after the first few years had passed, when Gwynplaine was almost grown up, and Ursus quite old, it had been Gwynplaine's turn to drag Ursus.

On seeing Gwynplaine growing up, Ursus had cast the horoscope of his deformity. "They have made your fortune," he said.

This family, consisting of an old man, two children and a wolf, had formed, as they wandered, a more and more closely united group.

Their wandering life had not prevented education. "To wander is to grow," said Ursus. Gwynplaine being evidently made to be "shown at fairs," Ursus had cultivated the mountebank in him, and in this mountebank he had encrusted knowledge and wisdom to the best of his ability. Ursus, spell-bound before Gwynplaine's amazing mask, used to mutter: "He has been well begun." That is why he had completed him with every ornament of philosophy and knowledge.

He often repeated to Gwynplaine: "Be a philosopher. To be wise, is to be invulnerable. Look at me. I have never wept. That is the strength of my wisdom. Do you think that if I had wanted to weep, I would have lacked occasions?"

Ursus, in his monologues, which were listened to by the wolf, said: "I have taught Gwynplaine *everything*, Latin included, and Dea *nothing*, music included." He had taught them both how to sing. He himself had a pretty talent for playing on the oaten reed, a tiny flute of that time. He played on it agreeably, as well as on the *chiffonie*, a sort of beggars' hurdy-gurdy, called the "truant instrument" in the chronicle of Bertrand Duguesclin, and which was the starting point of the symphony. This kind of music attracted people. Ursus showed his *chiffonie* to the crowd and said: "In Latin, this is an *organistrum*."

He had taught Gwynplaine and Dea singing according to the method of Orpheus and of Egide Binchois. It had happened more than once, that he had interrupted the lessons with this cry of enthusiasm: "Orpheus, musician of Greece! Binchois, musician of Picardy!"

These manifold intricacies of a careful education did not occupy the children to the degree of preventing them from adoring each other. They had grown up mingling their hearts as two saplings, planted near each other, mingle their branches, in becoming trees.

"I don't care," muttered Ursus, "I will marry them."

And he grumbled aside: "They bore me with their love."

The past, or the little that they had of it, at least, did not exist for Gwynplaine and Dea. They knew what Ursus had told them of it. They called Ursus "Father."

Gwynplaine had no recollection of his childhood, save of something like a passage of demons over his cradle. He had the impression of having been trampled in darkness, under misshapen feet. Was this intentional, or involuntary? He did not know. What he could recall clearly, and to its minutest details, was the tragic adventure of his abandonment. The finding of Dea made that doleful night a radiant date for him.

Dea's memory was even more in the clouds than Gwynplaine's. Being so little, everything had passed away. She remembered her mother as something cold. Had she seen the sun? Perhaps. She made efforts to plunge her mind back into the vanished conditions which were behind her. The sun? What was it? She remembered an unknown warm and luminous something, that had been replaced by Gwynplaine.

They said things to each other in whispers. It is certain that cooing is the most important thing in the world. Dea said to Gwynplaine: "Light—? That is when thou speakest."

Once, no longer able to restrain himself, Gwynplaine, seeing Dea's arm through a muslin sleeve, brushed this transparency with his lips. Disfigured mouth, ideal kiss. Dea felt a deep delight. She became rosy. This kiss from a monster, called the dawn to that fair brow, full of night. However, Gwynplaine sighed with a kind of terror, and as Dea's tucker gaped, he could not prevent himself from looking at the whiteness visible through that gate of paradise.

Dea raised her sleeve and stretched her bare arm to Gwynplaine, saying: "More." Gwynplaine extricated himself from the dilemma by flight.

Next day this game began again, with variations. Celestial slipping into that sweet abyss, which is love.

These are things at which God, in His character of old philosopher, smiles.

VII.

BLINDNESS GIVES LESSONS IN CLEAR-SIGHTEDNESS

At times Gwynplaine reproached himself. He had conscientious scruples concerning his happiness. He fancied that to allow himself to be loved by that woman who could not see him, was to deceive her. What would she say if her eyes were suddenly opened? How that which attracted, would repulse her! How she would recoil from her frightful lover! What a shriek! What hands veiling her face! What a flight! A painful scruple harassed him. He said to himself that he, a monster, had no right to love. A hydra idolized by an angel, it was his duty to enlighten this blind star.

Once he said to Dea:

"Do you know that I am very ugly?"

"I know that you are sublime," she answered.

He resumed:

"When you hear everybody laugh, they are laughing at me because I am horrible."

"I love you," Dea said to him.

After a pause she added:

"I was in death; you put me back in life. When you are here, heaven is beside me. Give me your hand so that I may touch God!"

Their hands sought and clasped each other, and they said not a word more, made silent by the fulness of love.

Ursus, always cross, had overheard them. The next day when they were all three together, he said:

"For that matter, Dea is ugly too."

The remark missed its effect. Dea and Gwynplaine were not listening. Absorbed in each other, they rarely heeded Ursus' exclamations. Ursus was profound, and it was at a dead loss.

This time, however, Ursus' circumspection in saying: "Dea is ugly too," indicated a certain knowledge of women in this learned man. It is certain that Gwynplaine in his loyalty had committed an imprudence. Said to a very different woman, and to a very different blind woman from Dea, the words: "I am ugly," might have been dangerous. To be blind and in love, is to be twice blind. In that condition one dreams; illusion is the food of dreams; to take away illusion from love, is to take away its aliment. All

enthusiasms enter usefully into its formation; physical admiration as well as moral admiration. Furthermore, one should never say anything difficult to understand, to a woman. She dreams over it. And often she dreams badly. An enigma in a reverie is damaging. The percussion of a word one has let fall, separates that which had adhered. It sometimes happens that a heart is insensibly drained, without knowing why or how, because it has received the obscure blow of a casual word. The being who loves perceives a decline in his happiness. Nothing is so much to be dreaded as the slow exudation from a cracked vase.

Fortunately, Dea was not of this clay. The stuff out of which all women are made had not been used for her. Dea's was a rare nature. The body was frail, but not the heart. What was at the very foundation of her being, was a divine perseverance in love.

All the mental brooding which Gwynplaine's words produced in her, ended by making her say these words one day:

"To be ugly, what is that? It is to do wrong. Gwynplaine does nothing but good. He is beautiful."

Then, always using that form of interrogation familiar to children and the blind, she continued:

"Seeing? What do all of you call seeing? As for me, I do not see, I know. It seems to me that seeing, hides."

"What do you mean?" asked Gwynplaine.

Dea replied:

"Seeing is something which hides the truth."

"No!" said Gwynplaine.

"Oh, yes!" replied Dea, "since you say you are ugly!"

She reflected a moment and added:

"Story-teller!"

And Gwynplaine had the joy of having confessed and of not being believed. His conscience was at rest, his love as well.

They had thus reached, she, the age of sixteen, he, nearly twenty-five.

They were not, as we should say to-day, "any further advanced" than on the first day. Less; since, as it will be remembered, they had had their bridal night when she was nine months, and he, ten years old. A sort of holy childhood continued in their love, just as it sometimes happens that the belated nightingale prolongs its nocturnal song, even to the dawn.

Their caresses hardly went beyond a pressing of hands, and at times a bare arm lightly brushed by a kiss. The first soft stammering of voluptuousness was enough for them.

Twenty-four and sixteen. So one morning, Ursus, who did not lose sight of his "shabby trick," said to them:

"One of these days you must choose a religion."

"Why?" asked Gwynplaine.

"In order to be married."

"But that is done," replied Dea.

Dea did not understand that one could be man and wife more than they already were.

In truth, this chimerical and virginal contentment, this innocent satisfaction of one soul by another, this celibacy taken for marriage, did not displease Ursus. What he said of it was only because sometimes one has to speak. But the physician, in him, found Dea, if not too young, at least too delicate and too frail for what he termed "Hymen in flesh and bone."

That would come soon enough, at all events.

Besides, were they not married? If the indissoluble existed anywhere, was it not in this cohesion—Gwynplaine and Dea? Admirable circumstance, they were adorably thrown into each others' arms by misfortune. And, as though this first link had not been enough, love had come to fasten, to wind around, and to closely press itself upon misfortune. What power can ever break the iron chain, consolidated by a knot of flowers?

Certainly, these were inseparable.

Dea had beauty; Gwynplaine had sight. Each brought a dowry; and they were more than a couple, they were a pair; separated only by the sacred interposition of innocence.

Nevertheless, no matter how much Gwynplaine dreamt, and absorbed himself, in the contemplation of Dea and in the spiritual depths of his love, he was a man. Fatal laws cannot be eluded. He underwent, like all the rest of immense nature, the obscure fermentations determined by the Creator. This, at times, when he appeared in public, made him look at the women who were in the crowd; but he immediately turned away this troth-breaking look, and hastened to retire, repentant, into his own soul.

Let us add, that encouragement was wanting. He saw aversion, antipathy, repugnance and rejection on the face of every woman he looked at. It was clear that none but Dea was possible for him. That helped him to repent.

VIII.

NOT ONLY HAPPINESS, BUT PROSPERITY

What true things there are in fairy stories! The burn of the invisible devil who touches you, is the remorse of a bad thought.

With Gwynplaine, the bad thought did not develop, and there was never any remorse. But there was sometimes regret.

Hazy mists of conscience.

What was it? Nothing.

Their happiness was complete. So complete that they were not even poor any more.

From 1689 to 1704 a transformation had taken place.

It sometimes happened in that year, 1704, that towards nightfall, a heavy wagon drawn by two strong horses, made its entrance into some little town on the coast. It resembled the hull of a ship turned upside down, the keel for a roof, the deck for a floor, and set on four wheels. The four wheels were all alike and as high as the wheels of a stone-dray. Wheels, pole and wagon, were all

painted green, with a rhythmic gradation of shades which went from bottle green on the wheels to apple green on the roof. This green color had finally made this wagon generally noticed, and it was known on all fair grounds; they called it the Green-Box. This Green-Box had but two windows, one at each end, and a door with steps at the back. On the roof, from a pipe painted green like the rest, smoke rose. This rolling house was always freshly painted and varnished. In front, on a movable bracket fastened to the wagon, and using the front window for a door, just above the horses' haunches, and next to an old man, who held the reins and managed the team, two *Brehaigne* women, that is, gypsies, dressed as goddesses, blew trumpets. The amazed citizens contemplated and commented on, this very jolting machine.

It was Ursus' old establishment, amplified by success, and promoted from a booth to a theatre.

A sort of creature, between a dog and a wolf, was chained under the wagon. It was Homo.

The old coachman who drove the hackneys, was the philosopher in person.

Whence came this growth of the miserable hut into an Olympian chariot?

From this: Gwynplaine had become famous.

It was with the true scent of that which is success among men, that Ursus had said to Gwynplaine: "They have made thy fortune."

Ursus, it will be remembered, had made Gwynplaine his pupil. Unknown persons had worked upon the face. He, in turn, had worked upon the mind, and behind that perfectly successful mask had put as much thought as he could. As soon as the child had grown a little and had seemed worthy of it, he had brought him out on the stage, that is to say, on the front board of the hut. The effect of this apparition had been extraordinary. The lookers-on admired, at once. Nothing to be compared to this surprising imitation of a laugh, had ever been seen. No one knew how this miracle of communicable hilarity was obtained; some thought it natural, others declared it artificial, and, conjecture being added to reality, everywhere, at every cross-road, in market-places, at all the fair and festival stations, the crowd rushed to see Gwynplaine. Thanks to this "great attraction," there had been, at first, a shower of farthings in the poor purse of the wandering group, then of heavy pennies, and finally of shillings. When one field of curiosity was exhausted, they passed on to another. Rolling

does not enrich a stone, but it enriches a hut; and from year to year, from town to town, with the growth of Gwynplaine's figure and ugliness, the fortune predicted by Ursus had come.

"What a service they rendered you there, my boy!" said Ursus.

This "fortune" had permitted Ursus, the manager of Gwynplaine's success, to have the cart of his dreams constructed, that is to say, a wagon large enough to carry a theatre, and sow science and art at cross-roads. Besides, Ursus had been able to add to the group composed of himself, Homo, Gwynplaine and Dea, two horses and two women, who were goddesses in the troupe, as we have just said, and servants. A mythological frontispiece was useful to a mountebank's booth in those days. "We are a wandering temple," said Ursus.

These two gypsies, picked up by the philosopher in the nomadic pell-mell of towns and suburbs, were young and ugly, and were called, by the will of Ursus, one Phœbe and the other Venus. Pronounced: *Fibi* and *Vinos*, since it is proper to conform to the English pronunciation.

Phœbe did the cooking and Venus scrubbed the temple.

Furthermore, on days of performance, they dressed Dea.

Outside of that, which for mountebanks as for princes, is "public life," Dea, like *Fibi* and *Vinos*, wore a Florentine skirt of flowered stuff, and a woman's hooded cape, which, having no sleeves, left the arms free. Ursus and Gwynplaine wore men's capes and large navy boots, like sailors on board a man-of-war. Gwynplaine had besides, for work and athletic exercises, a leather pelerine around his neck and on his shoulders. He took care of the horses. Ursus and Homo took care of each other.

Dea, being perfectly accustomed to the Green-Box, went and came about the interior of the rolling house with ease, and almost as if she saw.

The eye which could have penetrated into the inner structure and into the arrangement of this strolling edifice, would have perceived in a corner, fastened to the walls, and motionless on its four wheels, Ursus' old hut, now placed on the retired list, having permission to grow rusty, and henceforward exempted from rolling, as Homo was from dragging.

This hut, fixed in the rear corner at the right of the door, served as bed-chamber and dressing room for Ursus and Gwynplaine. It now contained two beds. In the opposite corner was the kitchen.

The fitting-up of a ship is not more concise and precise than was the interior arrangement of the Green-Box. Everything there was stowed, set in its place, foreseen, determined.

The chariot was divided into three partitioned compartments. The compartments communicated by openings, without doors. A piece of hanging stuff very nearly closed them. The rear compartment was the men's room, the front compartment was the women's room, the middle compartment separating the two sexes, was the theatre. The orchestral instruments and the scenic effects were in the kitchen. A loft under the arch of the roof contained the decorations, and by opening a trap in this loft the lamps which produced magic illuminating effects were disclosed.

Ursus was the poet of this magic. It was he who wrote the pieces.

He had various talents, he could do very special sleight-of-hand tricks. Besides the voices which he could make people hear, he produced all sorts of unexpected things, changes of light and darkness, spontaneous formations of figures and words, at will, on a partition, a mixture of light and shadow containing vanishing forms, and a host of oddities, amidst which, inattentive to the wondering crowd, he seemed to meditate.

One day Gwynplaine had said to him:

"Father, you look like a sorcerer."

And Ursus had replied:

"Perhaps that comes from my being one."

The Green-Box made after Ursus' skilful plan presented this refinement of ingenuity, that between the front and rear wheels of its left side the central panel turned on hinges, by means of chains and pulleys, and could be let down at will, like a draw-bridge. As it was lowered, it set free three hinged props, which, remaining vertical while the panel came down, set themselves upright on the ground like the legs of a table, and supported the panel, which now became a platform, above the pavement, as if it were a stage. At the same time the theatre appeared, enlarged by the platform which made its proscenium. This opening absolutely resembled a mouth of hell, according to the saying of the itinerant Puritan preachers who turned away from it with horror. Probably it was for an impious invention of this kind that Solon cudgelled Thespis.

Thespis, for all this, has lasted longer than is supposed. The cart-theatre still exists. It was upon rolling theatres of this kind, that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the ballets and ballads of Amner and of Pilkington were played in England; the pastorals of

Gilbert Colin in France; the double choruses of Clement, called Non Papa, at the Kermesses in Flanders; Theile's "Adam and Eve" in Germany; and in Italy, the Venetian parades of Animuccia, and of Ca-Fossis; the "Sylvæ" of Gesualdo, Prince of Venusia; Laura Guidiccioni's "Satyr," "The Despair of Philena," and "Ugolino's Death," by Vincent Galileo, father of the astronomer, said Vincent Galileo singing his music himself, while accompanying himself on the *viol-de-gamba*, and all those first attempts at Italian opera, which ever since 1580 have substituted free inspiration for the madrigal style.

The chariot, painted the color of hope, which carried Ursus, Gwynplaine and their fortunes, and at the head of which Fibi and Vinos trumpeted like two figures of Fame, formed a part of this great Bohemian and literary union. Thespis would no more have disowned Ursus, than Congrio would have disowned Gwynplaine.

On their arrival at the squares of villages and towns, in the intervals between the flourishes of Fibi and Vinos, Ursus commented upon the trumpets by instructive revelations.

"This symphony is Gregorian," he would exclaim. "Citizen burgesses, the Gregorian sacramental rite, that great progress, struck against the Ambrosian rite in Italy, and

against the Mozarabic rite in Spain, and triumphed over them only with difficulty."

After which the Green-Box halted in some spot chosen by Ursus, and when evening came, the proscenium panel was lowered, the theatre opened, and the performance began.

The Green-Box stage represented a landscape, painted by Ursus, who did not know how to paint, which made it possible, at need, for the landscape to represent a subterranean locality.

The curtain, which we now call the drop, was a silk patchwork of contrasted squares.

The public was outside in the street, on the square, curved in a semi-circle before the show, under the sun or under showers; an arrangement which made rain less desirable for the theatres of that time, than for the theatres of the present. When they could, they gave their representations in the court-yard of an inn, which gave them as many tiers of boxes as there were stories to the house. In this way, the theatre being more enclosed, the public was a better paying one.

Ursus was in everything; in the piece, in the troupe, in the kitchen, in the orchestra. Vinos beat the drum, whose sticks she handled marvellously, and Fibi strummed the morache, which was a sort of guitar. The wolf had

been promoted to the part of "utility man." He was decidedly a member of "the company," and occasionally played his bits of parts. Often when Ursus and Homo appeared side by side upon the stage, Ursus in his tightly-laced bearskin, Homo in his wolf's skin which fitted better still, no one knew which of the two was the beast,—this flattered Ursus.

IX.

EXTRAVAGANCES WHICH PEOPLE WITHOUT TASTE CALL POETRY

The pieces written by Ursus were interludes, a style which is somewhat out of fashion nowadays. One of these pieces, which has not come down to us, was entitled, *Ursus Rursus*. It is probable that he played the principal part in it himself. A pretended exit, followed by a re-entrance, was most likely the sober and laudable subject.

The title of these interludes of Ursus, were sometimes in Latin, as is seen, and the poetry sometimes in Spanish. The Spanish verses written by Ursus were rhymed like nearly all the Castilian sonnets of that time. That gave the people no trouble. Spanish was then a current tongue, and English sailors spoke Castilian just as the Roman soldiers spoke Carthagenian. See Plautus. Besides, at the theatre, as at mass, the Latin language, or any other that the audience did not

understand, embarrassed no one. They got along by accompanying it gaily with familiar words. Our old Gallic France, particularly, had this manner of being devout. At church the faithful sang "I'll take my joy" to an *Immolatus*, and "Kiss me, my love," to a *Sanctus*. It needed the Council of Trent to put a stop to these familiarities.

Ursus had composed an interlude, specially for Gwynplaine, with which he was satisfied. It was his best work. He had put his whole self in it. To give one's sum total in one's production, is the triumph of whoever creates. The she-toad that produces a toad, produces a masterpiece. You doubt it? Try to do as much.

Ursus had licked this interlude very much. This bears' cub was entitled: "Chaos Conquered."

This is what it was:

A night scene. At the moment when the motley curtain parted, the crowd massed in front of the Green-Box saw nothing but blackness. In this blackness three confused shapes moved in the reptilian state—a wolf, a bear and a man. The wolf was the wolf, Ursus was the bear, Gwynplaine was the man. The wolf and the bear represented the fierce forces of nature, unreasoning hunger and savage darkness, and both threw

themselves on Gwynplaine, and it was Chaos combating man. None of the faces could be distinguished. Gwynplaine struggled, covered with a winding sheet, and his face was hidden by his thick, falling hair. Besides, it was perfectly dark. The bear growled, the wolf gnashed his teeth, the man cried out. The man was underneath, the two beasts were overpowering him; he asked for aid and succor, he cast a profound appeal into space. He seemed to be at the last gasp. The audience was witnessing the agony of this outlined man, as yet, scarcely distinguishable from a beast; it was harrowing; the crowd looked on, panting; a minute more and the wild beasts would triumph and Chaos would re-absorb man. A struggle, cries, howlings, and all at once, silence. A song in the gloom. A breath had passed, a voice was heard. Mysterious music floated, accompanying this chant from the invisible, and suddenly, no one knowing whence, nor how, a whiteness arose. This whiteness was a light, this light was a woman, this woman represented mind; Dea, calm, pure, beautiful, formidable by her serenity and sweetness, appeared in the centre of a halo. A profile of light in a dawn. The voice—it was hers. A light voice yet profound and ineffable. Made visible out of the invisible, she sang in this dawn. They

thought they heard the song of an angel, or the hymn of a bird. At this apparition, the man, rising with a dazzled start, struck his fists upon the two brutes, now felled to earth.

Then the vision, borne on a mechanical slide which was difficult to understand, and for that reason all the more wondered at, sang these verses in Spanish, which was sufficiently pure for the English sailors who were listening:

"*Ora! Llora!*
De palabra
Nace razon
Da luze el son."

(Pray! Weep!
From the word
Reason is born,
Song gives light.)

Then she lowered her eyes, as if she had seen a gulf beneath her, and resumed:

"*Noche quitate de alli*
El alba canta hallali."

(Night, go hence,
Dawn sings the hallali.)

As she sang, the man rose more and more, and from being prostrate, he was now kneeling, his hands raised towards the vision, his two knees resting on the two motionless and

apparently, thunder-stricken beasts. She continued, turning towards him:

"Es menester a cilos ir
Y tu que llorabas reir."

(To heaven thou must go
And after weeping—smile.)

And approaching with a majesty of a heavenly thing, she added:

"Gebra barzon!
Dexa, monstro,
A tu negro
Caparazon."

(Break the yoke!
Quit, monster, thy black shell.)

And she laid her hand on his brow.

Then another voice arose, deeper and consequently sweeter yet, a broken and ecstatic voice of wild and tender gravity, and it was the human song responding to the chant of the stars. Gwynplaine, still kneeling in the dark upon the vanquished bear and wolf, his head under Dea's hand, sang:

"O, ven! ama!
Eres alma,
Soy carazon."

(O come! and love!
Thou art a soul,
I am a heart.)

And in that obscurity, a ray of light abruptly struck Gwynplaine full on the face.

They saw the smiling monster in that darkness.

It would be impossible to describe the commotion in the crowd. A sun-burst of laughter,—such was the effect. Laughter is born of the unexpected, and nothing could be more unexpected than this conclusion. There was no sensation to be compared to this slap of light on that ludicrous and terrible mask. They laughed around that laugh; everywhere, above, below, in front, at the rear, men, women, old bald-heads, rosy children's faces, the good, the bad, gay folks, sad folks, everybody; and even in the street, the passers-by, those who did not see, laughed, on hearing the laugh. And this laughter ended in clapping of hands and stamping of feet. When the curtain fell, they recalled Gwynplaine with frenzy. Hence, an enormous success. "Have you seen '*Chaos Conquered?*'" People ran to Gwynplaine. The careless came to laugh, the melancholy came to laugh, evil consciences came to laugh. Laughter, so irresistible, that at times it might seem unhealthy. But if there is one plague from which man does not flee, it is the contagion of joy. The success, however, did not go beyond the populace. A great crowd is made up of the

lower class. "*Chaos Conquered*" could be seen for a penny. The world of fashion does not go where one can go for a penny.

Ursus did not despise this work, over which he had brooded a long time.

"It is in the style of one Shakespeare," said he modestly.

The juxtaposition of Dea, added to the inexpressible effect of Gwynplaine. This white figure at the side of that gnome, represented what might be called divine astonishment. People looked at Dea with a sort of mysterious anxiety. She had something supreme and indescribable, partaking of the virgin and the priestess, about her; ignorant of man and knowing God. They could see that she was blind, and felt, she was a seer. She seemed standing upon the threshold of the supernatural. She seemed to be half in our light, and half in the other brightness. She came to work upon earth, and to work as Heaven works, with the radiance of dawn. She found a hydra and made a soul. She had the look of creative power, satisfied and stupefied by her creation; they thought they saw upon her adorably startled face the will of the cause, and her surprise at the result. They felt that she loved her monster. Did she know him to be a monster? Yes; because she touched him.

No; because she accepted him. All this darkness and light mingled, resolved themselves in the mind of the spectator into a blended light, in which endless perspectives appeared. How divinity adheres to the rough draft, how the penetration of the soul into matter is accomplished, how the solar ray constitutes an umbilical cord, how the disfigured is transfigured, how the formless becomes heavenly, all these glimpses of mystery, added an almost cosmical emotion to the convulsive hilarity produced by Gwynplaine. Without going too deep, for spectators do not like the fatigue of probing below the surface, something more was understood than was perceived, and the strange spectacle had the transparency of an avatar or incarnation.

As for Dea, what she experienced eludes human words. She felt herself in the midst of a throng, and did not know what a throng was. She heard a noise and that was all. For her, a crowd was a breath; and in reality, that is all it is. Generations are passing breaths. Man respires, aspires and expires. In that crowd Dea felt herself alone, and shuddered as if she were suspended over a precipice. In this confusion of innocence in distress, ready to accuse the unknown, in this uneasiness at the possible fall, Dea, serene nevertheless and superior to the

vague agony of peril, yet inwardly shuddering at her isolation, suddenly found her certainty and her support; she seized her life-line in the universe of darkness, she laid her hand upon Gwynplaine's powerful head. Unheard-of joy! She pressed her rosy fingers upon this forest of crisp, wavy hair. The touch of wool awakens an idea of softness. Dea touched a lamb which she knew to be a lion. All her heart was dissolved in ineffable love. She felt herself out of danger, she found her savior. The public thought it saw the contrary. For the spectators, the one who was saved, was Gwynplaine, and the savior was Dea. "What does it matter!" thought Ursus, for whom Dea's heart was visible. And Dea, reassured, consoled and delighted, adored the angel, while the people stared at the monster, and came under the power, and were fascinated too, though in the inverse sense, by this immense Promethean laughter.

True love does not grow weary. Being all soul, it cannot become lukewarm. A log covers itself with ashes, but not so, a star. These exquisite impressions were renewed for Dea every evening, and she was ready to weep with tenderness, while the audience was writhing in laughter. Around her, they were only merry; she—she was happy.

Nevertheless, the effect of merriment due to the unforeseen and stupefying grin of Gwynplaine, was evidently not desired by Ursus. He would have preferred more smile and less laugh, and a more literary admiration. But triumph consoles. He became reconciled with his excessive success every evening, in counting how many shillings the piles of farthings made, and how many pounds the piles of shillings made. And then he said to himself, that after all, when the laughter had passed away, "*Chaos Conquered*" would be found in the depths of their minds, and that something of it would linger with them. Perhaps he was not entirely mistaken; a work settles down in the public. The truth is, that the populace, attentive to the wolf, the bear, the man, then to the music, to those howlings subdued by harmony, to the night dispelled by dawn, to the chant releasing the light, accepted this dramatic poem of "*Chaos Conquered*" with a deep and puzzled sympathy, and with a certain tender respect for this victory of mind over matter, culminating in the joy of man.

Such were the rude pleasures of the people.

They sufficed for them. The people had not the means to go to the "noble matches" of the gentry, and could not, like the lords and gentlemen, bet a thousand guineas on Helmsgail against Phelem-ghe-Madone.

X.

AN OUTSIDER'S VIEW OF THINGS AND MEN

Man has one thought, to avenge himself for the pleasure given him. Hence, his contempt for comedians.

This being charms me, diverts me, instructs me, enchants me, consoles me, sheds the ideal upon me, is agreeable and useful to me, what harm can I do him in return? Humiliation? Disdain is a slap at a distance. Let us slap his face. He pleases me, therefore he is vile. He serves me, therefore I hate him. Where is there a stone for me to throw at him? Priest, give thine. Philosopher, give thine. Bossuet, excommunicate him. Rousseau, insult him. Orator, spit the pebbles from your mouth at him. Bear, fling your paving-stone at him. Let us throw stones at the tree, bruise the fruit and eat it. "Bravo!" and "Down with him!" To recite the verses of poets is to be pestiferous. Play-actor, avaunt! Let us put him in the pillory, in his success. Let us finish his triumph with hootings. Let him draw the crowd and create solitude!

And it is thus that the rich classes, called high classes, have invented that form of isolation, called applause, for the comedian.

The populace is less brutal. It did not hate Gwynplaine. Neither did it despise him. Only the lowest caulker of the lowest crew, of the poorest Indiaman moored in the meanest of the ports of England, considered himself immeasurably superior to this amuser of the "rabble," and held that a caulker, is as much above a mountebank, as a lord is above a caulker.

Gwynplaine was therefore, like all comedians, applauded and isolated. Besides, all success is a crime, here below, and must be expiated. Whoever has the medal, has the reverse.

But for Gwynplaine there was no reverse. Inasmuch as the two sides of his success suited him. He was satisfied with the applause and content with the isolation. By the applause, he was rich; by the isolation, he was happy.

To be rich, in these shallows of life, was to be no longer wretched. It means to have no more holes in one's clothes, no more cold on one's hearth, no more void in one's stomach. It is to eat according to one's hunger, and drink according to one's thirst. It is to have all the necessities of life, including a penny to give to a beggar. This indigent wealth, sufficient for liberty, was Gwynplaine's.

On the side of the soul, he was opulent. He had love. What could he wish for?

He wished for nothing.

Remove his disfigurement? It seems that this might be an offer to make him! How he would have repulsed it! Quit this mask, and resume his face, become again that which he had been, perhaps, handsome and charming; most certainly he would not have wished it! And wherewith would he have supported Dea? What would have become of the poor and sweet blind girl who loved him? Without that laugh, which made him a unique clown, he would be no more than an ordinary mountebank, a mere every-day acrobat, a picker-up of farthings from cracks in the pavement, and Dea would perhaps not have had bread every day! He felt himself with the deep pride of tenderness, the protector of this celestial, helpless creature. Night, Solitude, Destitution, Helplessness, Ignorance, Hunger and Thirst, the seven yawning jaws of misery, were raised around her, and he was the Saint-George fighting this dragon. And he triumphed over misery. How? By his disfigurement. By his disfigurement, he was useful, helpful, victorious, great. He had but to show himself, and money came. He was the master of crowds, he could see that he was the sovereign of the populace. He could

do everything for Dea. He provided for her needs; he satisfied her wishes, her caprices, her fancies, in the limited sphere of the wishes possible to the blind. Gwynplaine and Dea were, as we have already shown, one another's Providence. He felt himself carried away on her wings, she felt herself borne in his arms. Nothing is sweeter than to protect the one who loves you, and to give the mere necessities of life to the one who gives you heaven. Gwynplaine had this supreme felicity. And he owed it to his deformity. This deformity made him superior to everything. By it, he earned his living and the living of others; by it, he had independence, liberty, celebrity, inward satisfaction and pride. In this disfigurement he was inaccessible. Unfortunate circumstances could do nothing to him beyond that blow in which they had exhausted themselves, and which had turned into a triumph for him. This lowest depth of misfortune had become an Elysian summit. Gwynplaine was imprisoned in his disfigurement, but with Dea. It was, we have said it, like being in a dungeon in Paradise. There was a wall between them and the world of the living. So much the better. This wall immured, but defended them. What could be done to Dea, what could be done to Gwynplaine, with such a closure of life around them? Take away

his success? Impossible. They would have had to take away his face. Take away love? Impossible. Dea could not see him. Dea's blindness was divinely incurable. What disadvantage was there in his disfigurement for Gwynplaine? None. What advantages were there? All. He was loved in spite of this horror, and perhaps on account of it. Infirmity and deformity had instinctively drawn near each other, and joined. To be loved, is that not everything? Gwynplaine never thought of his disfigurement but with gratitude. He was blessed in this stigma. He felt, with joy, that it was eternal, and never could be lost. What luck that this boon was irremediable! As long as there would be public squares, fair-grounds, roads which one could follow, people below, heaven above, he would be sure of a living, Dea would lack nothing, and they would have love! Gwynplaine would not have changed faces with Apollo. To be a monster, was the form happiness took for him.

Thus, as we said at the beginning, destiny had overwhelmed him. This rejected man was a favored one.

He was so happy, that he came to pity the men around him. He had pity to spare. Besides, his instinct led him to look outside of himself, for no man is entirely consistent,

and a disposition is not an abstraction; he was delighted to be walled in, but from time to time he raised his head above the wall. It was only with so much greater joy, that he returned to his isolation near Dea, after comparing.

What did he see around him? What were these living creatures, of whom his nomadic existence showed him every sample, each day replaced by others? Always new crowds, and always the same multitude. Always new faces, and always the same miseries. A promiscuity of ruins. Every evening, all the social misfortunes came and made a circle around his felicity.

The Green-Box was popular.

A low price appeals to a low class. Those who came to him were the weak, the poor, the lowly. They took to Gwynplaine as they took to gin. They came to buy a pennyworth of forgetfulness. From the height of his platform, Gwynplaine reviewed the sombre people. His mind filled itself with all these successive apparitions of widespread misery. The human physiognomy is moulded by conscience and by life, and is the resultant of a multitude of mysterious furrowings. There was not a suffering, not a wrath, not an ignominy, not a despair, of which Gwynplaine did not see the trace. These children's mouths had not eaten. That man was a father, that

woman was a mother, and behind them, one could guess at families on the road to ruin. One face was coming out of vice and entering into crime; and one could understand why: ignorance and indigence. Another showed an imprint of early goodness, erased by social pressure, and turned to hatred. On the brow of that old woman, he saw famine; on that young girl's brow, he saw prostitution. The same fact offering a resource for the young one, and for that reason the sadder there. In that throng there were arms, but no tools; these workers asked for nothing more, but work was lacking. At times, an old soldier, now and then an invalid one, came to sit near the workmen, and Gwynplaine beheld that spectre, War. Here Gwynplaine read want of work, there, speculation, servitude. On certain brows, he noticed an indescribable driving back towards animalism, and that slow return of man to beast, produced below, by the pressure of the dull weight of happiness above. In this suffocating gloom there was an air-shaft for Gwynplaine. He and Dea had happiness through a kindly granted window. All the rest was damnation. Gwynplaine felt above him the thoughtless tramping of the powerful, the opulent, the magnificent, the great, the elect of fate; below, he distinguished the heap of the pale faces of the

disinherited; he saw himself and Dea, with their tiny, yet immense, happiness, between two worlds; the world above, coming, going, free, joyous, dancing, trampling under foot; above, the world that walks; beneath, the world which is walked upon. Fatal fact, which indicates a profound social evil; light, crushing darkness! Gwynplaine realized this misery. What? So reptilian a destiny! man crawling thus! Such an adherence to dust and mire, such disgust, such abdication and such abjectness, that one feels like putting one's foot upon it! Of what butterfly is this earthly life the caterpillar? What! In this crowd of the hungry and the ignorant, is the interrogation point of crime or shame everywhere, and before every one? The inflexibility of laws producing laxity of conscience! Not one child that does not grow up to be belittled! Not one maiden who is not growing up for sin! Not one rose but is born for the slime! His eyes at times, curious with the touched curiosity of emotion, tried to see into the very depths of that obscurity, where so many useless efforts were agonizing, where so many lassitudes were struggling, families devoured by society, morals tortured by laws, wounds gangrened by penalties, poverty gnawed by taxation, intelligences drifting in a whirlpool of ignorance, rafts in distress covered with

the starving, wars, dearth, death-rattles, cries, disappearances; and he felt the vague clutch of this poignant, universal anguish. He saw the vision of all that scum of misery over the sombre pell-mell of humanity. As for him, he was in port, and he looked at the shipwreck around him. Once in a while, he took his disfigured head in his hands and mused.

What folly to be happy! How one dreams! Thoughts came to him. Absurd notions crossed his brain. Because he had once upon a time succored a child, he had a fancy that he would like to succor the world. Clouds of reverie sometimes obscured his own reality; he lost the sense of proportion to the point of saying to himself: "What could one do for these poor people?" Sometimes his absorption was so great that he said it aloud. Then Ursus shrugged his shoulders and looked at him steadily. And Gwynplaine went on dreaming: "O! if I were powerful, how I would help the wretched! But what am I? An atom. What can I do? Nothing."

He was mistaken. He could do much for the unhappy. He made them laugh.

And, we have already said it, to make people laugh is to make them forget.

What a benefactor on earth a distributor of forgetfulness is!

XI.

GWYNPLAINE IS RIGHT, BUT URSUS TELLS THE TRUTH

A philosopher is a spy. Ursus, a watcher of dreams, was studying his pupil. Our monologues have a vague reflection on our brows, which is distinct to the eye of the physiognomist. This is why all that was going on in Gwynplaine did not escape Ursus. One day, when Gwynplaine was meditating, Ursus, pulling him by his cape, exclaimed:

"You strike me, as an observer, you fool! Take care, that is none of your business. You have one thing to do, to love Dea. You are happy by a double happiness: The first is, that the crowd sees your muzzle, the second is, that Dea does not. The happiness you possess, you have no right to. No woman, seeing your mouth, would accept your kiss. And that mouth which makes your fortune, that face which makes your wealth, do not belong to you. You were not born with that face. You took it from the great grimace which is at the bottom of infinity. You have stolen the

devil's own mask. You are hideous, be content with that luckiest prize. There are in this world, which is a very well made thing, the happy by right and the happy by a lucky hit. You are one of the happy by a lucky hit. You are in a cellar, where a star happens to be caught. The poor star is yours. Don't try to get out of your cellar, and keep your star, you spider! You have the planet Venus in your web. Do me the favor to be satisfied. I see you indulging in dreams, that is idiotic. Listen, I am going to speak to you in the language of true poetry: If Dea eats beefsteaks and mutton chops, in six months she will be as strong as a Turk; marry her right off, and let her have a child, two children, three children, a whole lot of children. That is what I call philosophizing. Besides, one is happy then, which is not at all stupid. To have little ones, that is heaven on earth. Have babies, clean them, wipe their noses, put them to bed, smear them and wash them, let them swarm all around you; if they laugh, it is good; if they squall, it is better; to cry, is to be alive; watch them suck when six months old, creep at a year, walk at two, grow tall at fifteen, love at twenty. Whoever has these joys, has all. As for me, I have missed them, which accounts for my being a brute. God, a maker of fine poems, and who

is the first of men of letters, dictated to his collaborator Moses: '*Multiply!*' That is the text. Multiply, you animal! As for the world, it is what it is; it does not need you for going along badly. Take no heed of it. Pay no attention to what is outside. Leave the horizon alone. A comedian is made to be looked at, not to look. Do you know what there is outside? The happy by right. You, I tell you again, are happy by chance. You are the thief of the happiness of which they are the proprietors. They are the legitimate, you are the intruder, you live in concubinage with luck. What more do you want than you have? Shibboleth help me! this impudent fellow is a boor. To multiply one's self by Dea, is nevertheless agreeable. Such felicity resembles swindling. Those who have happiness here below, by privilege from above, do not like those beneath them, to allow themselves so much joy. If they asked you: 'By what right are you happy?' you would not know what to answer. You have no patent, they have one. Jupiter, Allah, Vishnu, Sabaoth, no matter who, has given them a passport for happiness. Dread them. Do not meddle with them, so that they may not meddle with you. Do you know, you wretch, what the happy man by right, is. He is a terrible creature, he is a lord.

Ah! A lord—there's a man who must have intrigued in the Devil's unknown province, before coming into the world, so as to get into life by that door! How difficult it must have been for him to be born! He has taken no other trouble but that, but, just heavens! what a trouble it was! To obtain from destiny, that blind blockhead, that it should make you from the start, in the very cradle, a master of men! To corrupt that ticket seller, so as to make him give you the best place at the show! Read the memento that is in the hut, which I have placed on the retired list, read that breviary of my wisdom, and you will see what a lord is. A lord, is the one who has all, and who is all. A lord is he who exists above his own nature; a lord is the one who, when young, has the rights of an old man; old, the successes of a young man; vicious, the respect of honorable men; if a coward, the command of brave men, idle, the fruits of labor; ignorant, the diploma of Cambridge and Oxford; stupid, the admiration of poets; ugly, the smile of women; if Thersites, the helmet of Achilles; if a hare, the lion's skin. Do not misunderstand my words, I do not say that a lord must necessarily be ignorant, cowardly, ugly, stupid and old; I merely say that he may be all these things, without any detriment. On the contrary. The lords are

the princes. The king of England is but a lord, the first peer of the peerage; that is everything, it is much. Kings formerly called themselves lords; the Lord of Denmark, the Lord of Ireland, the Lord of the Isles. The Lord of Norway has been called king only for the last three hundred years. Lucius, the most ancient king of England, was styled, *Milord Lucius* by Saint-Telesphorus. The lords are peers, that is to say, equals. Of whom? Of the king. I do not make the mistake of confounding the lords with Parliament. The assembly of the people, which the Saxons, before the Conquest, entitled the *Wittenagemot*, the Normans, after the Conquest, entitled *Parliamentum*. Little by little the people have been turned out. The king's sealed writ, convoking the Commons, formerly bore the inscription *ad consilium impendendum*, they now bear *ad consentiendum*. The Commons have the right of consenting. To say 'yes,' is their privilege. The peers may say 'no.' And the proof is that they have said it. The peers can cut off the king's head, the people cannot. The axe-stroke at Charles I. was an encroachment, not upon the king, but on the peers, and they did well to put Cromwell's carcass on the gibbet. The lords have power, why? Because they have wealth. Who has turned

over the leaves of Doomsday-Book? That is the proof that the lords possess England, it is the register of the estates of subjects, compiled under William the Conqueror, and it is under the guardianship of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. To copy anything from it, you have to pay two pence a line. It is a grand book. Do you know that I have been domestic physician to a lord named Marmaduke, and who had an income of nine hundred thousand French francs a year? Think that out, you hideous idiot. Do you know, that with the hares of Earl Lindsay's warrens, alone, you could feed all the rabble of the Cinque Ports? But you just try to meddle with them. They keep good order there. Every poacher is hanged. Just for two long furry ears sticking out of his game bag, I have seen the father of six children, strung up on the gibbet. Such is the peerage. A lord's hare is more than one of God's men. The lords *are*, do you hear, you marauder? And we must say it's all right. But, suppose we say it's wrong, what is that to them? The people making objections! Plautus himself could not come up to this comic effect. A philosopher would be amusing if he were to advise that poor devil the multitude to cry out against the width and weight of the lords. You might as well have the foot of an

elephant discussed by a caterpillar. One day I saw a hippopotamus walk on a mole-hill; he crushed it all in; he was innocent. He did not even know that there were moles, that huge, simple mastodon. My dear fellow, crushed moles, that is the human race. Crushing is a law. And do you think that the mole itself crushes nothing? It is the mastodon of the mite, which again, is the mastodon of the *volvox*. But let us not reason. My boy, coaches exist. The lord is inside. The people are under the wheel, the wise man gets out of the way. Stand aside, and let it pass. As for me, I like lords, and I avoid them. I have lived with one. That quite suffices for the beauty of my recollections. I remember his castle, like a halo in a cloud. My dreams are behind me. Nothing can be more admirable than Marmaduke Lodge for grandeur, symmetrical beauty, rich revenues, the ornaments and the accompaniments of the edifice. Besides, the houses, mansions and palaces of lords, present a collection of all that is great and magnificent in this flourishing kingdom. I love our noblemen. I thank them for being opulent, powerful and prosperous. I, who am clad in darkness, I look with interest and pleasure upon that sample of celestial blue, which is called a lord. You entered Marmaduke

Lodge by an extremely spacious court-yard, which formed an oblong square divided into eight smaller squares, enclosed by balustrades, leaving a large open road on all sides, with a superb hexagonal double-basined fountain in the middle, covered by a dome of exquisite openwork, which rested on six columns. It was there that I knew a learned Frenchman, M. l'Abbé du Cros, who belonged to the Jacobin monastery in the Rue Saint-Jacques. One-half of the library of Erpenius was at Marmaduke Lodge, while the other half is in the theological lecture room at Cambridge. I used to read the books there, seated under the decorated portal. Those things are ordinarily seen only by a small number of curious travelers. Do you know, you ridiculous boy, that Sir William North, who is Lord Grey de Rolleston, and who sits fourteenth on the barons' bench, has more tall forest trees on his mountain than you have hairs on your horrible poll? Do you know that Lord Norreys, of Rycott, who is the same thing as the Earl of Abingdon, has a square donjon keep, two hundred feet high, bearing this device? *Virtus ariete fortior*, which seems to say, 'Virtue is stronger than a ram,' but which really means, you simpleton! 'Courage is stronger than a battering-ram!' Yes, I honor, respect, accept and revere our lords.

The lords, with the Royal Majesty, work to procure and preserve the advantages of the nation. Their consummate wisdom shines in thorny conjunctures. I wish that they had not precedence over every one. They have it. What is called principality in Germany and grandeeship in Spain, is called peerage in England and in France. As men had a right to find this world pretty wretched, God felt where the saddle galled it, He wanted to prove that He knew how to make happy people, and He created the lords to give satisfaction to philosophers. This creation corrects the defects of the other, and lets God out of the scrape. It is a sort of decent exit from a false position for Him. The great are great. A peer, in speaking of himself, says: *nos* (we). A peer is a plural. The king qualifies the peers, *consanguinei nostri*. The peers have made a multitude of wise laws, amongst others, one which condemns to death the man who cuts down a three-year-old poplar tree. Such is their supremacy, that they have a language of their own. In heraldic style, black, which is called *sable* for the general nobility, is called *saturne* for princes, and *diamond* for peers. Diamond dust, a starry night, *that* is the black of the happy. And even among themselves they have shadings, these mighty lords. A baron may not wash

with a viscount, without his permission. Those are excellent things,and safeguards for nations. What a fine thing it is for a nation to have twenty-five marquises, seventy-six earls, nine viscounts and sixty-one barons, which makes one hundred and seventy-six peers, some of whom are 'Grace,' and the others 'Lordship!' After this, what if there be some rags here and there! Everything cannot be made of gold. Rags—granted, but isn't there purple over yonder? One redeems the other. Everything must be made out of something. Well, yes, there are poor people; what of it? They trim up the happiness of the opulent. Zounds! Our lords are our glory. Charles Mohun, Baron Mohun's pack of hounds costs him as much as the hospital for lepers at Mooregate and as Christ's Hospital, founded for children, in 1553 by Edward VI. Thomas Osborne, Duke of Leeds, spends five thousand golden guineas a year, for his liveries, alone. The grandees of Spain have a guardian appointed by the king, who prevents them from ruining themselves. That is mean. Our own lords are extravagant and magnificent. I like that. Let us not rail as if we were envious. I am grateful for a beautiful passing vision. I have not the light, but I have the reflection. Reflection thrown upon my ulcer, you will say. Go to the devil!

I am a Job, happy to contemplate Trimalcion. O! what a beautiful radiant planet up there! It is something to have that moonlight. To suppress the lords, is an opinion that Orestes would not have dared to sustain, mad as he was. To say that the lords are harmful and useless, amounts to saying that states must be shaken, and that men are not made to live in herds, browsing on grass and bitten by the dog. The meadow is sheared by the sheep, the sheep is shorn by the shepherd. What could be more just? For every shearer, a shearer and a half. As for me, it is all the same to me; I am a philosopher, and I care about life as much as a fly. Life is nothing but a temporary lodging. When I think that Henry Bowes Howard, Earl of Berkshire, has twenty-four gala coaches in his stable, one of which has a silver, and another, a golden set of harness! Good gracious! I know very well that not everybody has twenty-four gala coaches, but we must not complain. Because you were cold one night, I suppose you think that is a great thing! You are not the only one. Others are cold and hungry too. Do you know that if it had not been for that cold, Dea would not have been blind, and if Dea were not blind, she would not love you! Reason, dunce! And then, if all the people who are scattered, were to complain, there

would be a fine uproar. Silence, that is the rule. I am certain that God orders the damned to hold their tongues, if not, God himself would be damned, by hearing an everlasting cry. The happiness of Olympus is bought at the price of the silence of Cocytus. Therefore, people, hold your tongues! I do better, I approve and admire. Just now, I was enumerating the lords, but you must add two archbishops, and twenty-four bishops! In truth, I am quite touched when I think of it. I remember having seen, at the house of the tithe-gatherer of the Reverend Dean of Raphoe, said Dean being a member of the peerage and the church, a huge stack of the most beautiful wheat taken from the peasants round about, and which the Dean had not been at the trouble of raising. This left him time to say his prayers. Do you know that Lord Marmaduke, my master, was Lord High Treasurer of Ireland and High Seneschal of the Sovereignty of Knaresborough, in the county of York! Do you know that the Lord High Chamberlain—which is an hereditary office in the family of the Dukes of Ancaster, dresses the king on his coronation day, and receives forty ells of crimson velvet, besides the bed on which the king has slept, for his trouble; and that the Usher of the Black Rod is his deputy! I should like to

see you deny this if you can: that the most ancient Viscount in England is Sir Robert Brent, created Viscount by Henry V. All the lords' titles indicate sovereignty over an estate, with the exception of Earl Rivers, who has his family name for his title. How admirable the right is which they have to tax others, and to levy, for example, as at this moment, four shillings in the pound sterling on incomes, which has just been prolonged for a year; and all those fine taxes on distilled spirits, on the excise of wine and beer, on tonnage and poundage; on cider, perry, mum, malt and prepared barley, on coal, and a hundred other similar things. Let us venerate that which *is*. The clergy itself is dependent on the lords. The Bishop of Man is the subject of the Earl of Derby. Lords have fierce beasts of their own, which they put in their coats of arms. As God did not make enough of them, they invent others. They have created the heraldic wild boar, which is as far above the boar, as the boar is above the pig, and as the lord is above the priest. They have created the gryphon, which is an eagle for lions and a lion for eagles, and which frightens lions by its wings, and eagles by its mane. They have the wyvern, the unicorn, the serpent, the salamander, the tarask, the dree, the dragon, and the hippogriff. All this, which is

a terror for us, is their ornament and decoration. They have a menagerie, which is called blazonry, and where unknown monsters roar. There is no forest, with its unexpectedness of wonders, to be compared to their pride. Their vanity is full of phantoms which walk about in it, as in a sublime night, armed, helmeted, cuirassed, spurred, the staff of empire in their hands, and saying in a grave voice: 'We are the ancestors!' Beetles devour roots, and panoplies devour the people. Why not? Are we going to change the laws? The lords form a part of the order of things. Do you know that there is a duke in Scotland who can gallop thirty leagues without leaving his own land? Do you know that the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury has a revenue of a million French francs? Do you know that Her Majesty has seven hundred thousand pounds sterling of civil list a year, without counting castles, forests, domains, fiefs, tenancies, freeholds, prebendaries, tithes and dues, confiscations and fines which exceed a million sterling? Those who are not satisfied, are hard to please."

"Yes," murmured Gwynplaine, thoughtfully. "The paradise of the rich is made out of the hell of the poor."

XII.

URSUS THE POET DRAGS OFF URSUS THE PHILOSOPHER

Then Dea came in; he looked at her, and saw nothing but her. It is so with love; one may be beset one moment by the torment of any kind of thought; the beloved woman comes, and abruptly makes everything which is not her presence, vanish, without suspecting that perhaps she is wiping out a whole world in us.

Let us mention a detail here. In "*Chaos Conquered*," one word *monstro* addressed to Gwynplaine, displeased Dea. Sometimes with the little Spanish, that everybody knew at that time, she replaced it on her own responsibility by *quiero*, which means, "*I wish it.*" Ursus tolerated these alterations of the text, rather impatiently. He would have liked to say to Dea, as in our day Moëssard said to Vissot: "You are not respectful enough toward the repertory."

"The Laughing Man." Such was the form that Gwynplaine's celebrity had taken. His name, Gwynplaine, almost unknown, had disappeared under this nickname, even as his

face, under the laugh. His popularity was, like his face, a mask.

His name, however, could be read on a large bill placarded in front of the Green-Box, which presented this composition, due to Ursus, to the crowd:

"Here is to be seen Gwynplaine, abandoned when he was ten years old, on the night of the 29th of January, 1690, by the villainous Comprachicos, on the sea-shore at Portland, who has now grown up, and is called

"THE LAUGHING MAN."

The existence of these mountebanks was an existence of lepers in a lepers' hospital, and of the blessed ones, in an Atlantis. Each day there was a sudden transition from the noisiest fair show, to the most complete abstraction. Every evening they made their exit from this world. They were like the dead, departing, on condition of being born again to-morrow. The actor is a revolving light-house—appearance, then disappearance, and he hardly exists for the public, except as a phantom and a gleam, in this life of rotating flashes.

The public square was followed by a cloister life. As soon as the performance was over, while the audience was breaking up, and the murmur of the crowds' satisfaction was losing

itself in the spreading streets, the Green-Box drew up its panel, as a fortress raises its drawbridge, and communication with the human race was cut off. On one side the universe, and on the other this booth; and in this booth there was liberty, clear conscience, courage, devotion, innocence, happiness, love, all the constellations.

Seeing blindness, and beloved disfiguration, sat side by side, hand pressing hand, brow touching brow, and intoxicated, whispered to each other.

The middle compartment served two purposes; for the public it was a theatre, for the actors, a dining room.

Ursus, always pleased when he could make a comparison, took advantage of this diversity of use to compare the central compartment of the Green-Box to the *arradash* of an Abyssinian hut.

Ursus counted the receipts, then they supped. Everything is idealized for love, and to eat and drink together when one loves, admits of all sorts of sweet, furtive familiarities, which makes a mouthful become a kiss. Lovers drink ale or wine from the same glass, as they would drink dew from the same lily. Two souls, in a love-feast, have as much grace as two birds. Gwynplaine waited on Dea, cut up her morsels, poured out her drink, approached her too closely.

"Humph!" said Ursus. And he turned away his growl which, in spite of himself, wound up in a smile.

The wolf, under the table, took his supper, inattentive to all that was not his bone.

Vinos and Fibi shared the repast, but were not much in the way. These two vagabonds, half wild, and who had remained scared, spoke the gypsy language to each other.

Later on, Dea went into the *gynecæum* with Fibi and Vinos. Ursus went to chain Homo under the Green-Box, and Gwynplaine looked after the horses, and after being a lover, became an hostler, just as if he had been one of Homer's heroes, or one of Charlemagne's Paladins. At midnight, all were asleep, except the wolf, who, penetrated with his responsibility, opened an eye now and then.

The next day, on awaking, they met again; they breakfasted together, generally on ham and tea; tea, in England, dates from 1678. Then Dea, according to the Spanish custom, and by the advice of Ursus, who thought her delicate, slept several hours, while Gwynplaine and Ursus performed all the little outdoor and indoor work which a wandering life exacts.

Gwynplaine rarely roamed beyond the Green-Box, except on deserted roads and in solitary places. In towns, he only went out at night, hidden by a broad, slouched hat, so

as not to wear off the strangeness of his face in the street.

His uncovered face was only to be seen upon the stage.

Moreover, the Green-Box had not much frequented towns; Gwynplaine, at twenty-four, had hardly seen any cities larger than the Cinque Ports. His renown, however, was increasing. It began to spread beyond the populace, and was rising higher. Among the amateurs of fair-ground oddities, and seekers of curiosities and prodigies, it was known that there existed somewhere, in a wandering condition of life, now here, now there, an extraordinary face. People spoke of it, they looked for him, they asked: "Where is it?" The Laughing Man was becoming decidedly famous. A certain lustre was cast upon "*Chaos Conquered*" by him.

So much so, that one day, Ursus, grown ambitious, said:

"We must go to London."

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